

Warlock of the Magus World

(巫界术士)

Arc 02

Twilight Zone

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Story Description:

From the future, from a society where man and technology have become one, a scientist known as Fang Ming, upon his death, is reborn in the body of a noble called Leylin. Leylin belongs to a world where magic, swords and knights are commonplace.

Leylin had been a weak, lusty and silly noble before his death. And upon rebirth, the new Leylin finds that fate has provided him with one gift – an AI Chip from his prior life.

With his trusty AI Chip, Leylin embarks on a never-ending journey as he hungers for knowledge and strength to achieve his one goal: becoming a great Magus – one of the most powerful wielders of magic in this world.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 288: Injury

Under the pressure of the space tearing, the sounds of bones cracking were constantly produced from Leylin's body, and fresh blood spurted out like a stream.

[Alert! Alert! Host body is currently in critical condition! Estimated time until cells completely fall apart from the pull of space: 8 seconds!]

The A.I. Chip projected a paragraph of red words in front of Leylin's eyes.

"This is happening even with the sturdiness of my body! What method did ancient Magi use to deal with the power of space?"

Leylin's expression suddenly turned sinister, his veins all popping out and his eyes turning red.

Just as the A.I. Chip counted down to the last second, the silver rays of light dissipated to reveal a pitch-black cave.

Leylin's mind jolted and he rushed towards the cave.

Bo! As if penetrating a shapeless water membrane, Leylin arrived in a physical world, and the immense pressure from space vanished.

"That was close!" It was all a blur in front of Leylin's eyes. With all his strength, he drew a red line and destroyed the runel on the spell formation beneath his feet, and went into a dead faint.

Drip! Drip!

The stalactite above him in the cave constantly dripped light red droplets that fell on the ground, producing a rhythmic sound.

Leylin's eyelids flickered and he opened his eyes.

"Ugh!" He held onto his forehead, feeling the pain that was all over his body.

"A.I. Chip! Check my current stats!"

Leylin immediately spoke inside.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 15 (21.1), Agility: 4 (14.4), Vitality: 19 (27.9), Spiritual force: 0.01 (104.3), Magic power: 0 (104) (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force). Status: Serious injuries all over body, exhaustion of spiritual force!]

The A.I. Chip quickly intoned. At the sight of his condition, Leylin could only force a wry smile.

As he had underestimated the dangers of spatial teleportation, he had not made enough preparations. This trip through the spatial passageway had almost cost him his life.

Not only had his overall stats decreased, even his spiritual force had been nearly completely exhausted.

This state would probably spell the end for regular Magi. However, Leylin had a shocking vitality, and was even able to maintain his consciousness.

“I really got seriously hurt! Alric, I will return one day...”

A cold glint appeared in Leylin’s eyes, and he shifted his gaze to his waist.

Seeing that the black leather pouch was still there, a look of relief appeared on his face.

This spatial leather pouch was a high-grade magic artifact. Though it did not have any offensive powers, its own defence was extremely startling, and with the spatial runes on the surface protecting it, it was not the least bit damaged

Thankfully this was the case, if not all of Leylin’s assets would have vanished into thin air.

“Any regular Magus lucky enough to survive my injuries would also require a large amount of time to restore their strength. Their strength might even go down a rank from the injuries!”

Leylin checked the state of his body. Though there were serious injuries

all around, he could feel a cold stream of air full of life and vigour being sent out from his heart. With his blood being pumped to all parts of his body, the stream of air within began to help heal his injuries. Though this process was very slow, the good thing was that this was a continuous process.

“The regenerative abilities of a warlock’s bloodline are this powerful!” A hint of joy was seen in Leylin’s eyes, “With the potions that I currently possess, I can even further increase the speed of my healing...”

With this thought, he expended a great deal of effort to raise the only limb that he could move, his right arm, and took out a red healing potion from the pouch. He used his teeth to remove the cork and, began to drink in huge gulps.

Rumble! A pink layer of light encompassed Leylin.

Due to the effects of the layer, the horrifying injuries on his body began to recover at a frightening speed.

Ka-cha! Crack! From Leylin’s body, the sounds of bones hitting each other could constantly be heard.

The muscles on his face constantly twitched, and he huffed through his nose; even his breathing was becoming more serious.

After a few minutes of this, the pink layer on Leylin’s body dissipated. Pak! Leylin soared into the sky, and from his previous position of half-sitting on the spell formation, he was now standing upright.

“All of my external injuries have now been healed. Though the internal injuries are a lot more troublesome, they won’t affect simple movements!”

Leylin exercised his four limbs, did a few motions that were standard in Knight drills, and furrowed his brows.

“No! With my body, I can only withstand the movements equivalent to that of a Preparatory Knight. If not, it would affect the recovery of my internal injuries...”

In other words, before his injuries were completely healed, Leylin could

only use the strength and speed of a Preparatory Knight.

Leylin touched his skin, retrieving armour from his pouch and putting it on.

His Magus robes had been torn apart by the pressure of the space, and they had long since turned into what looked like a beggar's rags, hanging from his body while being full of holes. Leylin simply tore his old clothes off.

After inspecting his body, Leylin focused his attention on the sea of consciousness within.

The state within was even worse. As a large amount of spiritual force had been used, his sea of consciousness even showed signs of drying up. The crimson colour had turned dimmer, and there wasn't even a hint of silver spiritual force.

Leylin's expression immediately turned grim, as even fine cracks had appeared on the walls of his sea of consciousness. If his sea of consciousness shattered, it wouldn't be as simple as falling in rank.

Upon seeing a little white ray still stuck in a corner in the sea of consciousness, Leylin's face turned even darker.

This was the mark that Alric had left on Jajone's body. After Leylin had killed Jajone, this mark had transferred itself to Leylin's sea of consciousness, sticking like a piece of sticky candy. No matter what Leylin did, it just would not disappear.

The only way to deal with this sort of mark was to use large amounts of spiritual force and slowly wear it down. Though it was from a rank 3 Magus, they were currently a huge distance apart, and without boosts from the original Magus, the mark would not be able to persist under Leylin's spiritual force. However, this required a lot of time, which Leylin did not have.

Now, however, it seemed like this was the time to deal with this thorn in his side!

Leylin sat down cross-legged, recalling the core information regarding

the high grade meditation technique, Kemoyin's Pupil. "Meditation in your spirit. With your eyes, make eye contact with the Giant Kemoyin Serpent and gain its strength!"

The daily training of meditation techniques was something every Magus had to do. Every time Leylin used Kemoyin's Pupil, adjusting the frequency of his spiritual force until it was the most compatible with the operation of the meditation technique, he was able to penetrate through time and space and see the ancient, terrifying amber vertical pupils of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent!

This state was a phenomenon written about in the Book of Giant Serpent, which only occurred after one had studied it to a very profound level.

As Leylin meditated to a deeper level, the crimson rays in his sea of consciousness gradually grew stronger, and traces of silver spiritual force welled from the bottom from his sea of consciousness, refilling the dried up spring with new vitality.

In the dark cave, spots of dark red light fluttered in the air like fireflies, and entered Leylin's body. This entire process was silent, but the terrifying apparition of a giant serpent appeared behind Leylin. The huge body kept rotating, becoming more and more substantial physically.

After one round of meditating, Leylin had regained half of his spiritual force, and a look of satisfaction appeared on his face.

"As expected of a high-grade meditation technique! Whether in terms of rate of improvement or recovery, it's the best on the south coast! It's a pity that there are only three levels..."

Worry appeared on Leylin's face

Though Kemoyin's Pupil was a high-grade meditation technique, of all the inheritance he had gained from the Great Magus Serholm, there were only three levels of information.

The level of a high-grade meditation technique and a Magus' rank corresponded to one another. In other words, unless he could find the rest

of the information regarding Kemoyin's Pupil, his spiritual force would be at a standstill due to the lack of a meditation technique.

"Based on the information that the Great Magus Serholm provided, the second half of Kemoyin's Pupil should be on the central continent. Where exactly am I right now?"

Leylin stood up, surveying his surroundings

"I'll go out and take a look! Hopefully, this is the central continent! Before anything else... A.I. Chip, are there any remedies for the damage to my sea of consciousness and the mark by the rank 3 Magus?"

Leylin enquired in his mind.

Large amounts of data, images and graphs flashed past, and the A.I. Chip worked at an extremely high speed, quickly giving an answer.

[Based on Host body's requirements, as well as comprehensive calculations of current conditions, this is the best solution: solidify large amounts of spiritual force in Host body's sea of consciousness, until all damage is healed and the mark completely disappears.

"Solidify large amounts of spiritual force?"

Leylin was surprised. This meant that before all his injuries were recovered, he would always need to solidify a portion of his spiritual force in his sea of consciousness, and would not be able to use that part at all.

In that case, his overall strength would largely diminish.

"How much do I need to solidify?" Leylin glanced at the cracks that were constantly expanding in his sea of consciousness, face falling while he asked cool-headedly.

[Requires 51.2% of Host's spiritual force!] The A.I. Chip quickly answered.

In other words, before completely taking care of all damages, I can only use the strength of a rank 1 Magus?"

Leylin stroked his chin.

Chapter 289: Barren

“To heal the damage done to my sea of consciousness, as well as dispel the mark from Alric, half of my spiritual force can’t be used during this period, right?”

Leylin stroked his chin while contemplating.

A moment later, he decided. “Let’s start!”

Weng Weng!

The moment he gave the order, silver spiritual force in his sea of consciousness clung on to the nearest cracks at the edges, and then crystallised and solidified!

The silver crystals covered about half of the sea of consciousness, and within the crystal, the milky-white spot was frozen, like a little worm frozen in amber.

After solidifying about half of his spiritual force, Leylin realised that the fine cracks in his sea of consciousness had stopped expanding after having been reinforced by the solidified spiritual force. He heaved a huge sigh of relief.

This way, he had completely dealt with the troublesome parts of his body. The price he had to pay for this was that he could only use the strength of a rank 1 Magus.

After stabilising his injuries, Leylin was now in the mood to survey his surroundings.

It was rather dim, with some moss that gave off some faint light, which allowed him to see just a few metres away. Everything else was just pitch black.

“This must be somewhere within a cave! I wonder what direction leads to the outside...”

Leylin gave a long sigh and took another look at the teleportation spell formation.

The spell formation here was the same as that in the Ancient Spirit Slayer Sect's secret plane. However, a rune at one of the corners had already been destroyed by Leylin.

Leylin believed that if he was the rank 3 Magus on the other end if he was not going to personally keep watch, he would destroy the spell formation at the other area. Hence, this teleportation spell formation would not be able to be used for a long period of time.

On one end, the set up by the Magi of the Spirit Slayer Sect was very simple. There was only the spell formation in the cave, and other than that, there was a very long and narrow passage that seemed to be carved out from the stone walls.

"Night Vision!"

Leylin used a support-type acolyte level spell on himself.

A black glint flashed in his eyes, and darkness no longer hindered his sight and he took his surroundings in.

"The dark elemental particles here are very dense. It seems to be more than in the south coast!" While using this spell Leylin could tell the large difference between the two continents.

If it was said that the concentration of dark elemental particles in the air in the south coast was 1, it would be at least 1.5 or even up to 2 here.

"A.I. Chip! Test the concentration of elemental particles in the air and make a comparison with that in the south coast!"

[Mission established. Beginning collection of data. Generating comparative diagrams.]

Quickly enough, the A.I. Chip transmitted two different pie charts to Leylin.

In the pie chart, the ratio of colours that represented different elemental particles had various percentages. These were all presented in front of Leylin clearly.

"On the right is the average data found on the south coast, while the one

on the left is the newest data!”

Leylin compared the differences between the two.

The newest set of data revealed that the concentration of dark, shadow and death, as well as other negative energy particles, rose to about two times that of in the south coast.

The positive energy particles such as that of light, plant and life were a little lower.

“Also, the concentration of earth elemental particles is quite high, while fire and water are quite meagre.”

Leylin touched his chin, looking thoughtful.

“In other words, there is approximately the same concentration of elemental particles here as in the south coast, though the composition is a little different. The concentration of negative elemental particles is almost equal to that of a small scale secret plane, while the positive elemental particles are only like that of the Chernobyl Islands...”

Leylin made a few conjectures and took a few large steps forwards, entering the long and narrow stone passage.

This passage was quite long, and only after ten or so minutes of strolling did he reach the end.

At the end of the passage was a large stone door.

Calling it a door might even be a stretch. From what Leylin could tell, it was just a large rounded rock that was blocking the exit.

Through the chinks in the rock, Leylin could hear the faint sounds of wind entering.

“It’s best to keep this stone door. When I need this teleportation spell formation in the future, I can still come back!”

With a thought, he used a rank 1 spell. “Shadow Stealth!”

Black rays surrounded Leylin’s body, and within the rays, he started to become transparent.

The effect of Shadow Stealth was that the user would temporarily become hard to see, and would be able to hide within tiny shadows. He could pass through most physical objects, but in this mode, he would be unable to attack, else this stealth mode would disappear. Area of effect attacks using energy or sound waves were also the bane of this spell.

Now, however, this was just meant to pass through a rock, so it was a simple task.

The faint image that Leylin turned into easily passed through the shadows of the cracks on the rock and he reached the outside.

“Hah! This is...”

Leylin looked at the view outside, and was stunned for a few moments.

He was standing on a little hill formed from large rocks, and surrounding him was a vast plain. There were also a large number of shrubs.

A gloomy darkness encompassed the whole area, making it so that there was no light at all. The sky was dim and looked as if it would collapse at any moment.

Vastness, gloominess, a deathly stillness! This was Leylin’s first impression about the place.

With the help of his night vision, Leylin did not have any trouble looking at his surroundings.

“This plant looks quite strange!” Leylin picked up a dried up twig on the ground.

“It has no leaves and at most, just has some thorns. On top of that, it seems like all the plants I can see share this characteristic!”

Leylin grabbed forward with his right hand, a little mole-like creature was captured from the ground. It constantly made ‘chik chik’ sounds.

“Its eyes are small and don’t seem to serve much of a purpose. It also looks like it has albinism! This is a mutation from not being able to get sunlight for a long period of time!”

Leylin mumbled to himself, clearing up his doubts.

Pak! He tossed the mole aside and pushed himself into the sky using a dull, red light.

Leylin kept ascending, and he could feel pressure on his head. Finally, after who knows how long, Leylin reached the end.

This was a large rock rampart. It had a metallic sheen to it, which made it look like the canopy of heaven.

“So the top of this place is the Earth’s crust!”

Leylin descended slowly, his expression still revealing his shock, “This is a subterranean world!”

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On a plain made entirely out of rocks and moss.

Two grey boar-like animals that were a lot smaller used their thick and coarse snouts to dig into the earth, searching for edible food.

Xiu Xiu! Two black arrows were suddenly released, and the sharp arrowheads penetrated the back of these two little beasts, pinning them to the ground.

“It’s not a bad harvest today. There are two grey boars! I can change the menu!”

On a hill, not far away, Leylin saw this scene, and joy was present in his smile.

Just ten or so minutes later, he used a wooden frame and made a fire. On top, the grey boars that had been skinned and washed were being roasted, a little grease rolling off the boiling hot skin. There was also an aroma that could make anyone drool mixed with the scent of pine wood, and Leylin’s forefinger couldn’t help but twitch.

“It’s been around a month since I exited from the large rock hill where the teleportation spell formation is.”

After gnawing away at an entire grey boar, Leylin sighed contently and

kept the other one for later.

After a month of wandering around, he now had an idea of how barren this subterranean world was.

Here, it was possible to not see any life despite walking for days, and only moss and bugs were tenaciously surviving.

The pig-like creature that Leylin named “grey boar” was the biggest animal he had seen thus far. It was also the tastiest.

At this thought, Leylin couldn’t help but feel a little regretful.

While the precious spatial leather pouch was extremely spacious, there was a limit to how much could be stored within. It was already full of precious items that Leylin had gained through various methods, the value of which was something even rank 3 Magus would be envious of.

Unfortunately, there was no good food or wine at all. Compared to precious materials, their value was much too low and it was not worth being stored within.

Hence, Leylin found himself living the life of a barbarian.

Water was not an issue. He was a Magus, and with a water elemental spell, he could easily produce large amounts of fresh water. If it was food, however, he had little in the way of options.

Because he was a rank 2 Warlock, it was fine if he didn’t eat for ten days or half a month, but if it was a full month, it wasn’t possible for him not to eat at all.

In addition, his living environment in his previous life, and even now, were all not unsatisfactory. He was used to having three meals a day, and even had some stringent requirements regarding the content of his meals.

Currently, after a long search, Leylin could somewhat find a few starchy plants and roots that he could consume. He might also be able to have some birds or berries.

Leylin was beginning to get tired of these meagre meals.

This boar-like creature that he had named “grey boar” was, by far, the

tastiest out of everything else that he had seen here up until now.

“Damn it! I hope this isn’t a completely barren land.”

After walking for a full month, besides this desert-area, Leylin had also seen some plains. Leylin began to have some suspicions, as even large animals were rarely seen.

Honestly speaking, as he was accustomed to sunlight, Leylin had never realised how precious it was.

Chapter 290: Assistance Required

Leylin had previously seen information regarding the resources of the subterranean world in an ancient book.

Legend has it that the ancient Magus World was only a small part of the surface of the earth, and before the ancient Magi's focus had switched to the other worlds, their goal had been the subterranean world!

The ancient Magi all wielded formidable power; even the sun and the moon would lose their splendor when put in front of these Magi. Many of the natives of the subterranean world had been subdued by them, and these Magi had then exploited layers and layers of the subterranean world to obtain endless wealth and resources.

It was recorded that the ancient Magi had exploited the 7 layers of the subterranean world!

It was said that the further down the layers one visited, the more powerful the ethnic race of that layer would be, and that at the core of the earth, there was an extremely terrifying female existence.

But these did not stop the ancient Magi from venturing further, and finally, the whole subterranean world had acknowledged them as their conqueror. This was all a part of the golden age of the ancient Magi.

Later, the still-dissatisfied Magi shifted their attention to different worlds, and conquered world after world until they ran into that extremely powerful world!

After what was known as the Final Confrontation, although that opposing world did not end up getting any benefits, neither did the Magus World—they deteriorated instead. Even the passage that led to the subterranean world had been destroyed by this war. Since then, the subterranean world had only appeared in legends.

At the least, within the entirety of the southern coast, Leylin had not seen any of the subterranean world's life-forms, nor had he heard of any passages to the subterranean world.

“From the previously gathered information and the sights seen, this must be the subterranean world; I just don’t know which layer this is! However, based on the dangerous life-form that approached, it ought to be, at most, the third layer, else I would have ran into many dangerous, high-energy life-forms. Also, the probability of the life-forms I ran into being from the first or second layer is really large...”

Leylin kept on pondering this over.

Although he was uneasy that this place was a barren region, Leylin continued travelling. The recent appearance of the grey boar supplied him with huge confidence to proceed on his journey.

While walking the whole journey, Leylin also made a record of his surroundings.

At the location of the ancient magic spell, which Leylin had named “Giant Stone Hills,” the signs of life were so weak that, at most, one could see only moss and some insects, and nothing else.

As Leylin went about his journey, the signs of life gradually increased, and later, he saw something like bat-like birds.

He would occasionally see the grey boars and as he travelled further, the rate of encountering them grew higher.

Thus, Leylin was certain. He had already walked away from the life-restricting region and come to the outside world.

[Beep! Discovered energy waves! The estimate is that these waves are the aftermath of level zero magic. Direction: 15 degrees east, at 3,123 meters.]

Now, the A.I. Chip had issued a message.

“Huh?!” Leylin’s thoughts shook: “Finally, there are some traces of an organism with energy!”

He quickly packed up and soon went in the direction from which the energy waves were emitted.

There was still a grave injury upon his body, not to mention that due to his sea of consciousness solidifying large amounts of spiritual force, he

could only display the approximate might of a level 1 Magus right now. However, he did not pay any attention to this trivial matter, and rushed to the scene of those energy waves.

What appeared in Leylin's sight was the scene of three males and two females confronting a high-energy organism.

These five people seemed to be a standard small squadron. Two males dressed in leather, who were at the very front, served as human shields, constantly swinging their huge iron swords. They, at the very least, had the power of a Grand Knight.

The other three wore gray robes that looked like what the magician apprentices of the southern coast wore, but the style of these robes was very old-fashioned; they were simple and unadorned.

"There are humans here! And they are acolytes!" Leylin inwardly felt elated at this prospect.

What the five acolytes were confronting was an organism that was similar to the huge grey boar, but with a physique that was almost a dozen times bigger, and 3 pairs of huge, crescent-moon-shaped teeth beneath its snout. Hard fur grew all over its body, and it was entirely covered in pine resin, mud, and other forms of muck. It formed thick lumps that, like a battle tank that had donned armor on. The level 0 magic spell that had been previously used by those apprentices seemed to have only left burn marks in the region; it had been incapable of breaking through even the outermost defences.

"Hoo hoo..." Two puffs of white gas were emitted from the nose of this organism that looked like a suckling pig. After pawing the ground, it suddenly charged, and its whole body was like a derailed train as it ran towards those two Grand Knights.

"Ah!"

The floor shook, causing one of those Grand Knights to lose his footing. Soon after, he slipped and was sent flying by this huge boar-like beast. Upon having been gored upon his waist and back by the organism's huge tusks, blood poured out from his wounds like spring water.

Seeing this scene, the other Grand Knight let out a loud shout and immediately retreated, thus exposing those three apprentices.

With the Grand Knight no longer impeding it, the boar fiercely bared its teeth at those apprentices with a blood-thirsty glint in its eyes.

The two female apprentices were scared and kept retreating backwards. Thud! Thud! The two of them tripped on something and fell down, expressions of despair coloring their faces.

The remaining male apprentice displayed a gentlemanly bravery, quickly appearing in front of these women with an expression of firm resolve. Still shouting something, he lifted his hand, from which small fireballs were emitted and aimed at the middle of the nose of that big-headed boar.

Pat! Pat The big boar's nose was blackened, but that did not slow down its assault speed by even a bit. On the contrary, the boar seemed to have been infuriated by that male apprentice, and its charging speed even seemed to have increased a little.

That male apprentice smiled helplessly, and then turned his head toward the two female disciples behind him and muttered something; his demeanor gave one the feeling that this youth was not afraid of dying.

Hoo hoo! The wild boar got closer and closer, and the three apprentices could now see clearly the blood vessels in the big boar's eyes and the thick pores below its fur.

Of course, what they would find very hard to forget was the cold radiance of the three pairs of snow-white, fierce, crescent-moon-shaped teeth of the boar.

“Shadow Binding!”

At that moment, Leylin suddenly made his appearance, and several tentacles made of shadow extended outwards from below the belly of the wild boar, and transformed into several hands that firmly dragged the boar by its front hooves.

Peng! As if a magnitude 9 earthquake had suddenly occurred, that boar, which was charging at a high speed, suddenly fell down while making a

huge noise; even the sounds of bones breaking could be heard from its body.

Soon after, the three apprentices saw a youth in leather armor walking out from behind the fallen boar.

Several black, shadowy ropes trussed up that fallen boar, not even leaving the smallest of weaknesses in the bindings.

“Are you alright?” asked Leylin, with a gentle smile on his face.

Those three apprentices saw Leylin, their expressions those of shock, and they opened their mouths to say, “gnkmfsk.....”

The smile on Leylin’s face drooped, and then he sighed. “This is really not the common language of the continent!”

What Leylin had just spoken in was the common language of the southern coast magicians, but what these 3 apprentices had spoken was not a language that Leylin recognised.

“This language’s endings sound a bit familiar to the Metiya language, but the syllables in between resemble the language of the highlands...”

Leylin did not feel surprised in the least about the differences in the language. After all, after the ancient era, the subterranean world had been isolated from the earth’s surface. It would be strange if the language was still similar.

“Hello! I am a nomad. Can you tell me what is this place?”

Leylin immediately switched to another language—this time it was the ancient Byron language!

The ancient Byron language brought with a strange power; it held power over rules and regulations. It could draw upon the power of the energy particles within the atmosphere and was the foundation of all magic spells.

Thus, the ancient Byron language was also a language that all magicians were required to learn.

Whether it was the surface world or the subterranean world, the ancient

Byron language was passed down from the ancient Magi, and there would not be even the tiniest bit of disparity in its usage.

Sure enough, upon hearing Leylin asking in the ancient Byron language, those 3 apprentices immediately reacted, and finally, that male apprentice took the lead to reply, “Respected Sir! Hello! This here is the Woody Wastelands of the Eastern Twilight Zone.”

He gave a respectful salute. Although Leylin’s actions were suspicious and the language that he initially used to speak was very different from their own language, from the way Leylin had easily subdued this huge, 6-toothed boar that had almost caused a complete wipe for their team, it was obvious that the other party’s strength was superior to theirs.

This was the wilderness, where the strong preyed on the weak. If they got on bad terms with Leylin, then they would be killed, and no one would come to know of it. Thus, this male apprentice’s mannerisms were very deferential.

“Eastern Twilight Zone?” Leylin frowned, and the A.I. Chip quickly searched through the storage database but did not find any details related to this.

“You might need this!” Leylin pointed at the Grand Knight who had been sent flying, and threw a blood clotting medicine towards them.

“Thank you!” Those two fallen female apprentices also stood up, and one of them immediately clutched the medicine and smeared it on that Grand Knight’s injury. After hesitating for while, she bowed to Leylin.

Hiss! Hiss!

At that time, a snake formed entirely of black gas slithered forward and spat out an armoured Grand Knight who had lost consciousness from within its mouth.

“This one is also your partner, right? I had also conveniently picked him up.”

Leylin pointed at the Grand Knight who had just been spat out, and those three apprentices, who had been scared by the sudden appearance

of that huge black snake, retreated many steps.

“This coward!” Leylin heard that female apprentice mutter, but he only smiled indifferently.

After that, he asked, “Oh, by the way, do you know which towns are close to here and where the Magi’s Bazaar is?”

These 3 apprentices looked each other in the eyes, and then that male apprentice, seeing Leylin’s agreeable demeanor and speech, gathered his courage and stepped forward as he said, “The closest town from here is Potter Town in the west, and its distance is one and a half days from here. About the Magi’s’ bazaar... the official Magi’s meeting point is located only in the capital city of the Twilight Zone....”

Chapter 291: Treasure

As if baffled by the kind smile on Leylin's face, this acolyte mustered up his courage and asked, "My lord! Are you... perhaps, not from here? May this humble servant know what your name is? I... I am Aaron!"

"Me? I'm obviously not from around here!" Leylin laughed as he looked at these 3 acolytes.

"Though there are still a lot of things I'd like to ask you, I suddenly realised that it would be much faster if I were to see it for myself..."

Due to the look that Leylin was giving them, the 3 acolytes began to tremble, as if they were being stared at by some predator.

"Let's go!" Aaron yelled, getting in front of the two female acolytes and chanting incantations.

"What a joke! You're too slow!" Leylin shook his head, and three black streams of air shot out and entered the foreheads of the three acolytes.

They turned dizzy, and without being able to even make a sound, they fainted.

Leylin approached the male acolyte called Aaron, his right hand directly pressing on the top of his head. The acolyte's eyes turned jet black, and even his pupils vanished.

Large amounts of images and voices were like a video, replaying in front of Leylin's eyes. The A.I. Chip worked at full speed, gathering all the information it thought to be important and organised them.

This was a spell that was like searching through one's spirit. It allowed Leylin to look through the memories of lower ranked Magi.

However, this spell was not actually all that useful. It was only effective against beings weaker than official Magi, and the targets couldn't be resisting.

When Leylin had first seen this technique in the library at the Four Seasons Garden, he had merely gotten the A.I. Chip to record it in passing.

Unexpectedly, he was able to find a use for it here.

Though it was a simple task for him to sneak into this little team and gain information with all the methods he had, Leylin couldn't be bothered to do all that. He didn't want to waste time either.

In addition, no matter how hard he tries to conceal it, there were many differences between magicians of the south coast and this subterranean world. This wasn't something that could be easily covered up with acting. Rather than being considered suspicious when the time came, it would be better to do something about it right now.

[Gathering information regarding subterranean language, named the 'Twilight Language'. Storing in database...] The A.I. Chip first collected information regarding the language. It would organise these data and transmit it to Leylin's memories. After some practice, Leylin would be able to quickly grasp the language used in this world.

Next was information regarding the geography and factions here.

Though Aaron was weak and had never left the Twilight Zone, his memories had been enough to allow Leylin to gain a better understanding of this subterranean world.

After he had gathered all of the valuable information, a cold glint flashed in Leylin's eyes and he forcefully began to modify Aaron's memories, removing all traces of his existence and the happenings today. He left behind the false memories of a high-ranked Magus with unclear facial features that had suddenly appeared and had helped them subdue the Six-Toothed Giant Boar.

These acolytes did not have anything Leylin found useful, and he did not want to kill anymore.

In a situation where he would not suffer any negative consequences, Leylin didn't mind doing some good deeds.

After all, he wasn't some homicidal maniac who killed people for the fun of it.

However this method of altering memories carried a very high risk.

Leylin paid no heed to Aaron's original memories and forcefully did it. If there were no aftereffects, his luck must be unbelievably good.

Afterwards, Leylin repeated the process on the other four.

Though the information he gained was about the same, it created a rather complete set of information.

"This Six-Toothed Giant Boar shall be your compensation!" Leylin looked at the acolytes who were unconscious on the ground and laughed. The black ropes that bound the boar suddenly tightened, and splat! Blood flew in all directions!

A long time after Leylin left, Aaron woke up while clutching his head, "Ugh... my head hurts... where am I?"

Next, fragmented memories entered his mind, scenes appearing in his eyes, "We met a Six-Toothed Giant Boar. That guy, Blake, actually ran away first! We were lucky that a lord who was passing by saved us."

Aaron looked at the corpse of the huge Six-Toothed Giant Boar, he whooped with excitement, "How many magic crystals would such a large amount of raw material fetch? I've struck the jackpot!"

Hah hah!

Fine streams of air streaked past Leylin's ears, as the scenery around him became long images, before further distorting and forming into streaks of light.

Leylin hurried towards Potter Town, recalling the information he had gained from the five.

This was indeed the underworld, and was the first layer, which was the closest to the continent on the earth's surface. It was a pity that this was but a small region that was disconnected from the rest of the underworld.

The Twilight Zone. This was the name of this region.

Around the Twilight Zone, if there weren't gathering points for fearful, sinister beasts, there would be a wide expanse of a lava ocean. These dangerous regions isolated the Twilight Zone from the external world, and

without the power of a Morning Star Magus, it was impossible to escape from the isolation caused by these regions.

The only pathway that connected it with the external world had long since been abandoned.

Legends had it that thousands of years ago, there were two Morning Star Magi who had engaged in a great battle near the channel. The resulting fluctuations resulted in the crust of the earth collapsing, and causing terrifyingly large rocks that were almost several hundred million tons to thoroughly seal the channel and stop all communications between Twilight Zone and the external world.

It was for this reason that the Twilight Zone instantly turned into an isolated island. Luckily, the Twilight Zone itself was rather large. Based on Leylin's estimations, it was about half the size of the south coast. However, the population was only about forty to fifty million. So, the resources were self-sufficient and able to maintain the upkeep till now.

"Based on Aaron's memories, this whole place is called the Twilight Zone, and it can be divided into the East, West, South, North and Central Regions, which makes up five in total. It is governed by regions, and there is no such thing as a kingdom or realm."

From Leylin's perspective, every city here could be said to be an independent power. As land was vast and there were few people, it was no surprise that organisations would flourish and decline quickly. Hence, it was rather chaotic.

Leylin was not interested in battles between mortals. What caught his attention was the information regarding the Magus World here.

In the Twilight Zone, the Magus World here had preserved the traditions from the ancient era, still developing through taking in personal disciples and forming schools of thought.

As for academies or anything of the sort, there was no mention of that in Aaron's memories.

Aaron and those two female acolytes were taught by a single mentor,

and the Grand Knight was an assistant that they had employed while they went on this expedition.

However, what caused Leylin the most excitement was the information regarding high-grade meditation techniques in Aaron's memories!

That's right. In Aaron's memories, there were mentions of great amounts of high-grade meditation techniques. His mentor had once even promised that if he proved to have enough potential, he could even apply to obtain the qualifications to get a high-grade meditation technique to train in!

Compared to the situation in the south coast, where large organisations were very strict regarding this matter, Twilight Zone was evidently much more relaxed regarding the restrictions against obtaining high-grade meditation techniques.

These Magi schools of thought set their foundations on different types of high-grade meditation techniques. Basically, all high-ranked Magi a given organisation would train in a single high-grade meditation technique. The earliest schools of thought were formed from a group of Magi who trained in high-grade meditation techniques, and for the better exchange of ideas, had set up their own organisations.

"A high-grade meditation technique!" A flame began to burn in Leylin's heart.

However, he quickly came back to himself. The underworld was the most similar to the ancient era and had received much inheritance from the ancient Magi. In addition, with the isolation of the Twilight Zone, the Magi environment here still retained the style of the ancient era. Hence, inheriting high-grade meditation techniques was not unusual.

"However, from the fact that a school headed by a rank 2 Magus can be considered a large school of thought, the high-grade meditation techniques must not be that effective. If it isn't damaged, there might be specific ingredients that cannot be found here."

In Aaron's memories, the might of the Magi here in general was similar to that on the south coast. Official Magi were highly regarded and rarely

seen. Rank 2 Magi were the big shots; perhaps a few cities in the five zones were under the control of rank 2 Magi.

“In general, the Magi here get to encounter even more high-grade meditation techniques. However, since these techniques are the core of every school of thought, besides a few specific people, Magi or acolytes will at most obtain a small part or a simplified version. This was the case for Aaron’s meditation technique.”

While searching his mind, some memories regarding meditation techniques were naturally recorded by the A.I. Chip.

Through comparisons, Leylin found that the meditation technique Aaron trained in was quite interesting. It had an ancient aura to it, similar to that of Kemoyin’s Pupil and Sacred Flame. However the requirements were all lower, and it did not have the ability to really increase any ability or affinity towards elements.

After a careful search through Aaron’s memories regarding the meditation technique, Leylin found out that he was training in the high-grade meditation technique from his mentor’s school of thought, Aegalus. It was the simplified form of the Core’s Flame technique.

This simplified version was a lot more effective in raising spiritual force as compared to the willpower runic meditation techniques that acolytes in the south coast used. After reaching a bottleneck in spiritual force, there was a certain probability of passing through the limits to become an official Magus by using items to assist this process. This probability was a lot higher than those who used Grine Water.

In addition, as he trained in the simplified version of a high-grade meditation technique, there would be no problems if he were to obtain a genuine copy of the technique and train in it. Hence, these simplified high-grade meditation techniques were given out to screen acolytes who were suitable for training in it.

“A treasure trove! The Twilight Zone is a large treasure trove of high-grade meditation techniques!”

Leylin’s eyes were suddenly so bright that it was frightening.

Chapter 292: Potter Town

The high-grade meditation technique Leylin trained in was what he had inherited from the Great Magus Serholm: Kemoyin's Pupil.

This high-grade meditation technique had very stringent requirements, as only warlocks with the bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent could train in it. In addition, there were only three levels for now.

Though the Great Magus Serholm had hinted that there was another part of the central continent, Leylin didn't even know where this central continent was. He wasn't going to have any high expectations.

To give himself a way out, Leylin set up a mission for the A.I. Chip a long time ago—to simulate the second half of Kemoyin's Pupil.

It was a pity that he lacked a database of information regarding high-grade meditation techniques that he could refer to. The A.I. Chip's research was going very slowly, almost akin to running on the spot.

Though Leylin had found the high-grade meditation technique Sacred Flame, which he was quite interested in, it was even more incomplete than the others he had. There was even a whole bunch of residual effects from practicing that technique that caused Leylin to shrink back.

Now, there seemed to be a possibility for him to completely restore these two meditation techniques.

"Based on Aaron's memories, he knows about at least a dozen schools of thought. Even if the high-grade meditation techniques they have aren't complete, based on my abilities, I will still be possible to plunder a few..."

Leylin's eyes shone.

The high-grade meditation techniques here were strictly restricted, so he most probably had to sign some contract in order to enter the school and become a core member in order to receive them. There might even be more strict requirements. However, Leylin was not planning on somehow sneaking in and secretly learning them. He was now a rank 2 warlock, and with the added bonus from his bloodline, his battle power far exceeded

that of a regular rank 2 Magus, which was already rarely seen in Twilight Zone. If he used his brains and some methods, ordinary schools would be unable to obstruct him.

In addition, he was quite interested in some special information available here in the subterranean world.

Though the south coast, as well as the subterranean world, did research on the knowledge passed down through the inheritances of ancient Magi, the subterranean world had preserved more of the styles and academic knowledge from the ancient era. This was extremely tempting to Leylin.

He naturally did not think that anything from past times would be better than what was in the present. After all, after developing for so many years, the academic knowledge and foundations were more suitable for the current Magi's progress and learning. However, this did not mean that knowledge from the ancient era was useless.

The might of the ancient Magi was deeply embedded in Leylin's mind. He was desperate to find out the secret behind the ancient Magi's power.

Based on Leylin's speed, he naturally did not need to spend a day and a half to get to Potter Town, as Aaron had said.

With the use of a few spells that increased his speed, the town appeared in front of him after about half an hour.

Potter Town's architecture was very different from what Leylin had seen on the south coast. It had an elegant yet formal style. Most of the buildings were rather tall, perhaps to properly utilise every single bit of land available.

At the heart of the little town was a tall minaret, which practically pierced into the skies. A bright little ball of light was at the peak, emitting light and warmth.

"So this is the most basic material that the people of the subterranean world rely on—sun stones! It really is similar to the sun!"

At this sight, Leylin suddenly felt a little moved. Though he specialised in dark elemental particles, he had been underground for such a long

period, and suddenly seeing the bright sunlight got him quite excited.

Based on the memories he had gotten from Aaron, this light did not come from the shine of a real sun. It came from a high-energy mineral, the sun stone!

This mineral from the subterranean world was able to emit ultraviolet rays and warmth similar to that produced by the sun for a long period of time.

Every town here in the subterranean world had this type of lighthouse, which stored Sun Stones of different sizes. Every day, the people would depend on this method to have sunlight and provide energy to crops.

At the beginning, Leylin had already noticed that there were very little green plants growing here. This was because there was no sunlight, which meant that no photosynthesis could take place. Carbon dioxide and the like were absorbed by a grey moss, which could perform the conversion to oxygen.

Here, however, he finally saw a bit of green.

At the side of Potter Town, there was a large area of densely packed farmland. As the range of the light produced by the minaret was limited, every bit of space was important.

At the place closest to the town, a type of oat similar to that which grew on the south coast was grown here, though it did not seem to be growing that well.

At the area where the sunlight was directly shining, a type of large mushroom was being cultivated.

This mushroom was very large, even reaching Leylin's calf. It was grey on the outside and looked extremely juicy.

This mushroom made up around 80% of the crops being cultivated in the outer regions of the town. This was a terrifying ratio and meant that this mushroom was probably the staple food of the residents here.

This was the truth. This type of mushroom was called the Grey Spotted

Fungus, and it was a high yield fungus that did not require much sunlight. In Aaron's memories, it had always been the staple food for people of the Twilight Zone.

In the Twilight Zone, nobility and Magi enjoyed oats, meat, and other precious ingredients, while peasants could only live off of the Grey Spotted Fungus.

Wherever there were people, there would be a certain hierarchy. In a Magus world where some people possessed extraordinary might, this was especially so, and Leylin had no desire to change anything.

Walking along the road, Leylin saw a wooden fence that was like an enclosure. There were also two guards in tattered clothes, holding lances that were rusted all over.

"Halt! What are you doing?" Upon noticing Leylin, the guards immediately gripped their lances, evidently on guard.

Leylin's leather armour made them feel a little wary.

The guard who had spoken was speaking in the Twilight Language. This language had already been sent to his memories by the A.I. Chip while he was on the way here, and after practising for one or two days, normal conversation was a simple task.

"I am a tired wanderer hoping to enter the town to get some rest and supplies! Don't worry, I will abide by the rules of the town." Leylin gave a slight smile, answering fluently in the Twilight Language.

Hearing Leylin's words, the two guards dropped their wariness. This also had to do with Leylin's harmless smile and handsome face, which easily gained him a favourable impression.

"Of course! If you show your identification documents to prove you aren't any of the fugitives, it's fine!"

The slightly shorter guard curled his lips.

"Of course, I know the procedure!" Leylin grinned, producing a piece of parchment and dangling it in front of the two guards. "Is this it?"

His voice immediately became faintly discernable, and it seemed as if some red rays flashed from his eyes.

“Of course! No problem!” The two guards momentarily felt a little dizzy but quickly regained their senses. “Welcome to Potter Town! The person in charge here is Baron Joseph. His emblem is a longsword and a giant eagle. I wish you a pleasant...”

“Good! One more question...”

Leylin obtained more information he wanted from the guards and bade them farewell with a gentle smile. He then entered the town.

Based on the directions from the guards, Leylin came to a small inn. After paying a few gold pieces, the lady boss, who was pleasantly surprised, led him to the best room of the inn.

The dinner was simple, with oats and salted meat, but this was enough to gather the attention of the children, who stood in a circle and watched him.

Oats that emitted the aroma of fresh milk, as well as meat, were a luxury that only the upper class of the Twilight Zone could have. If there were fruits or vegetables, they were also something that was reserved for nobility and Magi.

Though this inn had already brought out the best it had for Leylin, he still found it a little hard to stomach.

After the meal, he gave the boss lady a bit of silver as a tip. He then instructed her not to let anyone disrupt him, and closed the door to his room.

Though only a coarse sackcloth was spread on the bed, it was still much better than the hard rocks outside. Leylin half-lay on the soft bed hands behind his head and went into a daze.

Next, he retrieved a green wooden goblet from his leather pouch. “The extract of the Wisdom Tree! It’s rumoured to provide enlightenment to Magi and increase spiritual force, as well as aiding in breaking through bottlenecks, which is something that goes against the heavens.”

Rays of gentle, green light shone on Leylin, illuminating his bewitched expression.

“A.I. Chip! How’s the analysis on this thing?” Leylin contemplated in his mind.

[Pure extract from the Wisdom Tree, possessing a powerful life force. Can increase vitality, and help a rank 2 Magus break through to a certain extent. Nature: Unknown!]

The A.I. Chip sent out some information.

“The essence from the Wisdom Tree, coupled with the goblet made from the body of the Wisdom Tree, definitely would not only have one effect when they’re combined together...” Leylin focused on the green wooden cup, eyes exhibiting regret.

“It’s a pity that this sort of thing will be wasted if I use it now. It can only increase my spiritual force by a bit. At most, it can only let me reach the level of a peak rank 2 Magus. As for advancing through the bottleneck to rank 3...”

Leylin had only recently advanced to be a rank 2 Warlock. He was still a long distance from the peak.

Hence, he gave a long sigh and kept these two items in his spatial leather pouch.

Dang dang! A melodious chime resounded from the top of the minaret at the heart of the town.

As if switching off a light, the sun stone stopped emitting light and the entire town sunk into a darkness like the external world.

“It must be the night. The sun stone is now being changed to be maintained and protected!”

Leylin was naturally aware of this.

Chapter 293: Opening A Shop

The subterranean world was shrouded in darkness.

The towns and cities here where there were sun stones were the areas in which human traffic was high.

In the human cities of the Twilight Zone, the sun stone would be changed every 12 hours to be maintained, and kept the same light conditions as the surface of the earth.

However, a small area like Potter Town wouldn't have a high-grade sun stone. At most, it would be the size of an egg.

Based on rumours, the larger a sun stone was, the higher its value and better its function was; it was said that at the capital of the five regions, there was a sun stone the size of a small mountain!

The moment a sun stone was lost, the entire area would be engulfed in darkness and surrounded by countless dangers. Hence, at every area populated by humans, the sun stone was always placed in an area with the highest level of security.

Seeing the darkness outside the window, Leylin heaved a gentle sigh and pulled the curtains shut.

After setting up a defensive spell formation, Leylin sat up on the bed and began to meditate.

Dark red specks of light were pulled out of the air one after another, and gathered at Leylin's body.

In his sea of consciousness, the silver-white crystals became even more solid, and the slight cracks at the sides seemed to be repairing themselves.

As for the mark, with the seal from Leylin's solidified spiritual force, that milky-white light had become dimmer. He could tell that in the near future, the mark would be completely destroyed.

"It's going well!" After seeing this, Leylin, who had been on edge this entire time, could finally relax.

Afterwards, he collapsed onto the bed and went into a deep sleep.

Morning! With the regular pattern from the alarm clock, a ray of light passed through the curtain and entered Leylin's room.

"I finally got some rest!"

Leylin opened his eyes, feeling extremely comfortable. The tiredness accumulated from camping outside for a month dissipated with just a single day of rest.

This had to do with his frightening vitality. Even in his heavily injured state, all of his fatigue could be restored with a night's rest.

"Good morning, Sir!"

In the dining area within the inn, the slightly plump boss lady brought oatmeal bread and milk for breakfast, a smile on her face.

A few children with sullen, yellow skin and some dust on their face were all gathered at a corner, staring hard at Leylin's breakfast with desire apparent in their eyes.

However, they only dared look from afar, gulping down some saliva but not approaching him to beg for some food.

Whether it was Leylin's elegance or his armour, all of it was something that regular people did not possess.

These people usually held a lot of power and a high position. They had once seen someone with a huge hammer use his black hand to crush a child's head because he was annoyed by him!

After that incident, that murderer was merely imprisoned by the enforcement team for a few days and subsequently released after paying a fine.

Hence, these children had a clear understanding of the situation: never provoke anyone with weapons!

"Go away! Don't bother this lord who wants to enjoy his meal!"

Seeing these children harrassing her important guest, this lady boss

shouted.

“It’s alright!” Leylin picked up a slice of oatmeal bread, “Let them have it!”

“Yes, of course! My lord has such a kind heart!”

The plump boss lady’s expression revealed her thought that this was a waste. However, she still tore the bread into several pieces and gave them to the children, “You’re so lucky to have met such a kind-hearted lord! Eat and leave!”

The children quickly stuffed the oatmeal bread into their mouths, the aroma of food spreading inside their mouths. They cupped their hands over their mouths, on the verge of tears.

The children had argued and even almost fought amongst themselves for just a bit of bread.

There was a boy who was a little older than the rest of the group who had kept the oatmeal bread he had received in his clothes, probably to bring it back for someone to eat.

Though Grey Spotted Mushrooms could fill one’s stomach, they tasted horrendous.

In addition, not everyone was able to even eat Grey Spotted Mushrooms. From the state of the children’s clothes, they must have come from poor families, and might not have even had decent meals.

Leylin merely glanced at them for a moment, and then shifted his focus away.

He tossed out a piece of gold, which flew through the air and fell into the palm of the lady boss’ hand.

“I really like Potter Town and wish to settle down here. I also want to open a shop here. Do you know what procedures I have to go through?”

Until his injuries completely healed and he regained his strength as a rank 2 Magus, Leylin decided to temporarily live in seclusion.

He had a long life anyway and could afford to waste this bit of time.

“You want to open a shop here?” The lady boss was shocked, “What kind of shop do you want to open?”

“What do you think of a weapons shop?”

Leylin spoke nonchalantly. The purpose of this was to have a cover while he analysed the long sword of the Rays of Dawn. Hence, he had chosen a weapons shop.

He could clearly see that the Woody Wastelands was near Potter Town, and was an area where adventurers would go to. It wasn't a bad idea to make and sell some weapons here, and it would definitely be profitable.

“A weapons shop...” The boss lady hesitated, “My lord, you'll need to go through the department of internal affairs and the guards. Also, weapons are restricted items, so you'll need to get approval from the capital and Joseph...”

“I see.” Leylin stroked his chin, and asked where the department of internal affairs, guard post and the baron's residence were before leaving the inn.

In just a few days, a weapons shop called “Blazing Hammers” covertly opened on the commerce street in Potter Town.

For others, it might be a little troublesome to go through so many procedures, but Leylin was a Magus. With just some spells to confuse the target or alter memories, a lot of issues could be solved.

Besides, he could afford to spend a lot of money, so the opening of the shop was obviously a smooth sailing process.

The shop took up a large amount of space. At the front was the counter and shop, and behind was the storeroom and smelting room, as well as the rooms of Leylin and a few workers.

The moment one entered, they would see sharp weapons displayed on the wooden shelves lining two walls, glinting in the light. An icy feeling spread in the room.

“This is a first-rate steel weapon!”

A huge man who dressed like a mercenary entered immediately attracted to a large steel sword.

“This tempering technique is usually only found in a few large weapon shops!” The huge man caressed the sword, the silvery blue luster at the edges causing his eyes to be fixated on it.

The price marked on the shelf almost had him biting his tongue, “Fifty gold! This really is the price that would be found in the capital! But this is just a small town...”

The people in the Twilight Zone naturally had their own currency. The gold and silver used here were even more valuable than that of the south coast, and the currency was completely different.

In order to help mask his identity, the gold and silver pieces that Leylin used were actually the money he had gained from the south coast, the shapes of which he had forcefully changed to match the currency used here.

“What would you like?”

An intelligent-looking young man wearing the uniform of an attendant, who Leylin had hired, quickly asked with a smile.

“That sword is too expensive!”

The large man waved the sword around for a while, reluctant to part with it. “Can it be cheaper?”

“My apologies!” He had an apologetic smile on his face. “Our shop does not allow bargaining. This is a rule set by our boss!”

The large man’s face turned red, and he almost had the urge to cause a ruckus. However, he suppressed it.

Those who could make a living off of selling weapons usually had very powerful backgrounds; he wasn’t planning on dying just for this.

In addition, the shop owner wasn’t any regular person either. It was said that he was an adventurer of noble blood who had retired. Not only had he taken care of the department of internal affairs and the guards with an

insane speed, even the baron had treated him as an important guest.

What was even more shocking was that the shop owner had a terrifying might that far exceeded that of the average adventurer.

This man had personally witnessed the young, black-haired shop owner take care of a few thugs, who wanted to extort protection fees, in a few seconds. They had subsequently been taken away by the guards, who had been informed and had arrived very quickly.

It was said that their fate was to become a labourer until their deaths!

These methods had intimidated a lot of people; after caressing the sword for a long time, as if it were his wife, the large man eventually reluctantly left.

Before leaving, he even had the young man reserve the sword, saying that he would return once he had enough money.

That night, after the last customer had left, the young man closed up and went to the room at the back.

Knock knock!

“Boss, can I come in?” The young man tried to make his voice sound calm.

Every time he saw his boss, he felt like he would suffocate. The imposing aura from his new boss was too intense; the young man swore that he had once seen a real count, but even he had lacked the elegance and dignified aura this man exuded.

“Perhaps my boss really is the successor of a very ancient noble family, and is merely experiencing the life here!” The young man thought in his heart, before thinking it funny. He was imagining the wildest of fantasies.

“Is it Baelin? Come in!” A very youthful voice sounded.

Baelin composed himself, opened the door and entered.

In the room, a handsome man in a loose robe was lying on a soft chair, occasionally drinking a beverage with peppermint mixed into it. He even had a huge black book in his hands.

He was literate and had books! This was the biggest sign of nobility in the Twilight Zone!

Chapter 294: Meteor Sword

“Baelin! Is anything the matter?”

Leylin gazed at the servant the baron had introduced to him and smiled.

“No, I’d just like to report the situation in the shop to you!” Baelin tried his best to be less nervous.

“Though there are a lot of people who show interest in our shop, boss, your prices... they’re a little too high, so it’s not good for business. I even think our shop will make a loss this month...”

“Is that so! I understand. You can go back now!”

Leylin waved his hands, looking as if he hadn’t been paying attention.

“Alright, you’re the boss! You call the shots!” Upon seeing this, Baelin could confirm that this Lord Leylin was probably a successor from an ancient noble family who was out here to experience life. If not, he definitely wouldn’t be taking things so lightly.

After Baelin left, Leylin started reading the book in his hands again.

On the yellowed parchment paper, red runes constantly moved like flames.

“To make a weapon from the Rays of Dawn is extremely difficult!” Leylin sighed.

The reason why he had opened this shop was to have his own smelting area while he recuperated. He could do some experimentation here.

As for those blades outside? They were only the products made on the side during experimentation.

Two years passed in a blur.

The residents of Potter Town were already used to this Master Leylin, the boss of the weapons shop.

Leylin rarely went outside, and barely took care of his weapons shop. Everything was left to Baelin, and he only would occasionally come over to

supervise.

As he masked his identity well, nobody found out he was a Magus. At the most, they thought he was a young master from a noble family that was a wastrel.

In time, the words “Blazing Hammers” at the top of the shop were beginning to become mottled and show signs of decay.

The shop still had that lifeless aura to it. Though the weapons were known to be of superior quality, the prices were so expensive that people could only shrink back.

Leylin had no plans on relying on this shop to earn money. If the prices were too low, not only would business pick up, the other shops in the same industry would become jealous. Though he wasn’t afraid, Leylin didn’t want to stir up trouble over these small matters.

“Brother Baelin! I’m here again!”

Along with the voice, a boy with brown hair walked in through the entrance to the shop. He wore a linen short-sleeved shirt with some patches on it, and his eyes shone with intelligence.

“So it’s Longbottom!” Baelin had no choice but to greet him.

“Hehe, Brother Baelin, let me help you!” Longbottom snatched the cleaning rag from Baelin’s hands and began to wipe at the wooden shelves and cabinets.

His movements were practiced, and he was very familiar with the places that were often overlooked. Evidently, this was not the first time he was doing this.

After wiping the shelves and cabinets until they were sparkling clean, Longbottom expectantly looked at Baelin, waiting to be rewarded.

“Ugh, not again. Not again!” Baelin held his head, helpless.

“I told you! You’re only allowed to use it for five minutes, and you can’t tell anyone about this! You especially can’t let the boss find out!”

If not for this little kid’s beautiful sister, Baelin wouldn’t bother with

him.

“I know, I know!”

Longbottom quickly nodded his head like a chick pecking at rice, and came before a shelf and took out a silver cross blade.

This cross blade was quite short, which was very fitting for Longbottom's stature. It was about two fingers wide, and the hilt was made from pure silver. There was even a red diamond embedded within, making it seem very luxurious!

Evidently, with Longbottom's financial background, he would definitely not be able to buy it no matter how much he saved up.

Longbottom held the cross blade carefully in his hands as if he were clasping some precious treasure.

“Hah!”

Longbottom slashed forward while holding the blade with both hands, making a crooked attack.

“Sigh... Little Longbottom, I'm not trying to be mean, but you'll never be able to become a knight by learning with those normal soldiers!”

Baelin couldn't help but shake his head. Potter Town was but a small one, and only the guards of the baron were knights. The rest were all made up of peasants, so what power could they have?

This Longbottom had wanted to become a knight from a very young age! For this reason, he would secretly watch the soldiers' training.

After discovering this place, he would come over to help free of charge, with the price of having Baelin lend him something in the shop for him to play with for a while.

Out of everything in the shop, Longbottom's favourite weapon was this cross blade.

“Brother Baelin, then who should I learn from?” Longbottom held the blade, his expression desolate, “I'm only the son of a regular hunter, and we can't pay the expensive fees to go through training...”

Longbottom had someone in mind.

Ever since he had found out that the boss of the shop, Master Leylin, was a powerful knight, he was even more diligent in coming over. He might even become like the main characters in stories about knights, having a great talent in this area and ending up with Leylin taking a fancy to him!

“Sigh...” Looking at this, Baelin could only sigh. In Twilight Zone, it was extremely difficult for a regular person to become outstanding.

“Little Longbottom, I think you should give up on this impossible dream, and come over here to learn how to read from me every day!”

Baelin proposed seriously, “Though I don’t know that many letters, it’s enough for you to be able to read the accounts. When the time comes, you’ll be able to find some kind of bookkeeping job.”

“Thank you, Brother Baelin!” Longbottom was extremely touched. Even if he wanted to study from someone, he would need to pay an exorbitant fee, yet Baelin was actually willing to teach him for free. This was something that he was very grateful for.

“It’s nothing, it’s nothing!” Baelin turned red, “It’s for my own sake too. If boss were to see this, I might not even be able to keep my job...”

“See what...”

Leylin’s voice sounded, and Baelin was stunned.

Baelin stiffly turned back to the sight of Leylin, who had just entered.

“Bo-Boss! Why are you here now?” The smile on Baelin’s face was extremely stiff, and he was even stuttering while speaking.

He had let others play with the products in the shop, and that was already a huge offense. Leylin could fire him just like this! However, the pay here was so high to the point that Baelin was not willing to give up this job!

Baelin inwardly grumbled. Leylin had always been reclusive, and often stayed in his room or the smelting room, not making himself known for days on end. How could he be so timely today and meet with this sight?”

Thud!

Longbottom's hands trembled, and the cross blade fell, producing a low thud as it hit the floor.

"Mas-Master Leylin!"

Longbottom called out while stuttering. For regular people like him, Leylin, the boss of a weapons shop, was an incredible person. Longbottom now felt like a thief who had been caught on the spot, and even his calves began to tremble.

"Oh?" Leylin shot a glance at the blade, and smiled at Baelin, "It looks like you've been having a lot of fun while I wasn't around!"

"Boss! No, my lord! Please forgive me!" Baelin was so scared that he quickly knelt, while Longbottom's body was already limp and he was unable to speak.

"I'll settle this matter with you later!" Leylin glared at Baelin and spoke to Longbottom. "Kid, you have been touching the things in my shop as you pleased without gaining permission. How are you going to make it up to me?"

"My—My lord..." Longbottom's teeth chattered and his voice sounded like he was crying. There were only regular people in his family, and they were perhaps even of a lower status to others. What could he give to make it up to Leylin?

"Alright! From today onwards, you are to report here and do some odd jobs here for two hours every day as compensation!"

Having teased him enough, Leylin touched his chin and made his decision.

Longbottom was stunned. What terrified him the most was that Leylin might have wanted him to pay money, and then get the guards to throw him in jail. Odd jobs? What kind of punishment was that?

"What are you in a daze like that for? Quick, thank my lord!" Baelin quickly reacted and pressed Longbottom's head down.

“Thank you so much, my lord! Thank you so much!” Longbottom only now reacted, gratitude apparent on his face.

To have a good reason to touch the weapons in the shop was basically a dream for him. He was even able to make a connection to Leylin, a legendary, powerful Knight. It was something he never imagined would happen!

“Alright! Come and work here starting tomorrow afternoon!”

Leylin nodded, turned, and went to the back of the shop.

Actually, Leylin had long since noticed Baelin and Longbottom’s actions, but he couldn’t be bothered with them. However, a few of his experiments were going quite well, and he was in a good mood.

After he entered his room, Leylin thought, “A.I. Chip! How’s the progress of the weapon blueprint simulation?”

[Beep! Weapon blueprint simulation: 100%. Completed setup of blueprint and runes!]

The A.I. Chip quickly intoned, and then sent an image of a weapon before Leylin’s eyes.

This was a black cross blade that looked to be very ordinary. It could be said to be ordinary to the extreme, but the cross section was filled with lines to loop energy, as well as runes.

[Design of exclusive weapon is complete, named “Meteor”] the A.I. Chip’s robotic voice sounded.

In these two years, Leylin had finally completely analysed the middle-grade magical artifact that was the weapon for the Branded Swordsman—the Rays of Dawn. He had combined all his knowledge on smelting and spell formations, in order to create his own exclusive weapon!

Chapter 295: Toying

[Warlock class-specific weapon: Meteor Sword! Length: 1.67m. Width: 0.03m. Carved within are the following: High-grade energy converging runes, fire elemental brand runes, dark elemental amplification runes... Estimated grade of product: High-grade magic artifact!]

The long sword the A.I. Chip projected in front of Leylin constantly rotated, and listed large quantities of data around it.

“The design is completed. All that’s left is to find the materials and actually make it.” Leylin was excited.

However, when he entered his sea of consciousness, this joy quickly dissipated.

After two years, the silver-white crystal in his sea of consciousness was still as resilient as ever, and had only shrunk a little in size.

The spiritual force it produced allowed Leylin to increase his might from that of a regular rank 1 Magus, to the strength of a peak rank 1 Magus.

As for the cracks at the edges of his sea of consciousness, they had yet to be completely restored.

The mark left behind by the rank 3 Magus, Alric, on the other hand, had been completely expelled by Leylin.

However, the stubbornness of the mark of spiritual force left behind by the rank 3 Magus had exceeded Leylin’s expectations. He had estimated that it would take around two months to dispel, but in reality, it had taken an entire year before he was able to completely remove the mark from his sea of consciousness.

“Perhaps I should find an opportunity to make contact with the Magi of the subterranean world!”

Due to his serious injuries, Leylin could only display the strength of a regular rank 1 Magus. Hence, he had chosen to lie low. However, now that he had regained enough of his strength to reach the peak of rank 1, he could be considered the best in the Twilight Zone, and it was natural that

he would want to explore.

In addition, the progress of the reparation of his sea of consciousness was going very slowly, which made Leylin furrow his brows.

He was prepared to find some methods out there to hasten this process. If not, and he were to rely on just time, he had no idea how long this would take.

At this thought, Leylin began to feel jittery.

His expression twitched, and he untied a black water flask and took a drink. Leylin's facial muscles then relaxed, and he forced a smile, "Also, I have to find a way to control the overly emotional side effects of being a Warlock!"

For Warlocks, the ancient bloodlines did give them formidable power, but they also negatively impacted their emotions

These emotions would lie dormant deep in one's blood or even one's spirit, occasionally causing trouble and causing the Warlock to sink into a state of extreme emotion.

For the Magus who sought truth and control, this was not tolerable.

Hence, Leylin had been searching for a method to solve this problem.

"The inheritances found in the south coast are only useful up to a certain point, and the items left behind from the ancient era are very few. There is very little information regarding Warlocks, and there doesn't seem to be any sorts of methods there. But this place is different!"

Leylin's eyes shone with hope. "This is the Twilight Zone, a part of the subterranean world! Due to the lack of connection with the outside world, it has very little external influences, and preserves the inheritances from ancient times in their entirety. In other words, aside from the central continent, there are still places that might have research material regarding warlocks; this must be one of those areas!"

At this thought, Leylin touched his chin.

"Potter Town is in a very remote area, and the resources at the Woody

Wastelands can, at most, attract only a few acolytes. I haven't seen any Magi here. It looks like I have to go deeper into the Twilight Zone..."

Potter Town was only a small town in the vastness of the Twilight Zone, and while he had stayed here for over two years, Leylin had seen very few Magi.

Apart from this town, there was an even bigger city. If he advanced layer by layer, he would find the eastern capital!

Leylin was sure that there were many Magi in the city!

The rules in the subterranean world were different from the south coast. The existence of Magi were made public; they would not hide in some unknown location and isolate themselves from the world.

The Magi who wielded power were naturally of a high status. Even the nobility had to bow to them.

"Though the population of Twilight Zone is only half of the south coast, with the extensive spread of high-grade meditation techniques and their simplified versions, there are still many instances of Magi appearing. The hierarchy of Magi is similar to that on the south coast, though I don't know how many rank 3 Magi there are, or if there are any Morning Star Magi here..."

Leylin propped up his chin using his hand, sinking into deep thought.

.....

The candle on the table burned with dull yellow flames, reflecting Leylin's long, flickering shadow onto the wall...

During the afternoon of the next day, little Longbottom punctually came to the shop.

"You are very punctual! I like kids who obey rules!"

Leylin was bored to death, so he took over what had been Baelin's position, and was yawning at the counter. He pointed towards the storeroom at the side. "Your task is to move those metals over there to the backyard!"

“Boss! Is this...” Baelin endured for a while, but could not take it any longer, and pointed to the storeroom as he spoke to Leylin.

“Every single one of those metals is even heavier than Longbottom’s own bodyweight...?”

Following his finger, one could see, through the half-open door to the storeroom, chunks of metal that were the size of a human head.

This were the raw materials that Leylin used while smelting. They were very dense, and their weights were terrifying.

When they had been transported here, Leylin had called for three strong men, and it had taken an entire afternoon for them to transport them. In Baelin’s eyes, Leylin was obviously making things difficult for the little kid by assigning him to such work.

“It’s his choice whether he wants to do it or not!”

Leylin shrugged his shoulders, found a chair, and began to doze contentedly.

“Brother Baelin, I want to give it a try!” Seeing the mountain of metals, he gulped, but at the sight of Leylin beginning to nod off, he made his mind and began to work.

The metals were very heavy, and just lifting it a centimeter off the ground caused Longbottom’s arms to tremble.

Thud! Longbottom curved his back and slowly moved to the open space at the back, the metal sounding a low thud as it fell.

“Hah...” Just moving one piece of metal was enough to cause Longbottom to pant, large drops of perspiration dripping from his face.

“Longbottom, you can’t continue, or else you’ll sustain long-term injuries...”

Baelin naturally knew that the terrifying amount of work he had to do would permanently harm, or even disable, a growing child’s body!

Even if he wasn’t doing this for Longbottom’s pretty sister, Baelin felt that he could not let this youngster he got along with to continue like this.

“No!” Longbottom looked in the direction of Leylin, who had stalked off, with a resolute expression on his face.

In that whole afternoon, the residents of Potter Town could see a strange sight at Leylin’s weapon shop.

A petite young boy was slowly working, moving pieces of black metal that were half his size.

That day, after completing two hours of work, Longbottom’s arms and legs constantly trembled, and he had no more strength to fiddle with any blades, dragging his fatigued body back home.

This went on for ten days, and only then did Longbottom finish moving all the metals to the open space at the backyard.

“You really work very slowly!”

Leylin judged, dissatisfied. “Next, I want you to move them back to the storeroom. Is that understood?”

“But Master Leylin...” Upon hearing this task, Longbottom’s body trembled. This physical labour had caused him a sore back, and it was so painful that he could not sleep at night. And now, he had to move them back? Longbottom felt like he would die from the fatigue!

He wasn’t just having fun here. He still needed to help his parents with work!

“Boss, you’re just toying with him!”

Baelin could not take this any longer, and jumped out while roaring at Leylin.

“Shut up.” Leylin spoke indifferently, but his glare caused Baelin to retreat while holding onto his chest and being unable to say a word.

“I’m the boss here, and what I say goes!” A teasing smirk was still about Leylin’s lips. “Youngster, you can leave right now, but if you do, you are to never return to my shop again!”

Longbottom was quiet, and then went to the metals without a word, and began to work.

“What an interesting fellow!”

Leylin poured himself a cup of peppermint beverage, leisurely watching Longbottom moving back and forth.

Leylin still needed to prepare for a period, and was quite rather bored. He only needed to pay brief attention to the calculations of the A.I. Chip, and could find time to toy with this youngster.

This labour was not something a child would be able to handle. In addition, it was easy to sustain injuries while working. Leylin had already discovered some bruises on Longbottom's calves and arms.

“How long can he sustain this for? I look forward to it.”

Leylin touched his chin, a profound smile on his face.

For the next few days, Longbottom's eyes were lifeless and he wobbled as he walked, causing people to be worried that this kid might just collapse and die.

An unexpected person also visited Leylin's shop.

“Esteemed Master Leylin!” A beautiful young girl wearing a coarse sackcloth as a skirt curtsied towards Leylin.

“Could you please forgive my brother? Longbottom has been doing physical labour here for about fifteen days, and I'm afraid that he might not be able to hold on...”

This young maiden sobbed while she produced a white handkerchief.

After opening it, Leylin found that there were some silver coins and copper, as well as a small broken piece of gold coin that was about a quarter of the original size.

“If it's for what he has done wrong, I'm willing to compensate you here...”

Leylin glanced at this young maiden and shook his head.

Chapter 296: Plot Twist

“I’ve mentioned it before. This is a mutual agreement. If your brother doesn’t want to do this, he’s free to leave at any time!”

Leylin spoke slowly.

“If you don’t believe me, you can ask him!” Leylin pointed at Longbottom, who was standing towards the side.

“Sister!” Longbottom ducked his head, a little afraid, but he sounded resolute, “It’s my own choice to work here at Master Leylin’s. It has nothing to do with him. Please don’t stop me.”

“You...” This young maiden was exasperated and pulled at Longbottom’s arm, revealing a large bruise, “Look at this. How are you still engrossed in these Knight fiction novels...”

“Cough cough!” Leylin suddenly coughed, interrupting her.

“This is my shop. If you wish to discipline your brother, please do it elsewhere and do not disrupt my business...”

Leylin said this boldly, though there were no customers in his shop right now.

“My-My apologies, my lord!” The young maiden covered her mouth, realising that her words just now were offensive to Leylin.

She bowed, revealing her fair breasts and quickly left with Longbottom in tow. The sounds of them arguing could still be heard.

Baelin watched her back, looking enchanted.

“What a pure, kind-hearted lady! Don’t you agree?” Leylin looked at Baelin, revealing a smile full of bad intentions.

“Of course! Miss Venus is a very diligent young lady, and works at three jobs outside in order to help with her family’s finances.”

Baelin subconsciously answered.

“Hm, I have no right to say anything about her kindness, but regarding

her purity?” Leylin’s grin widened.

“Boss! You can scold me, but you can’t tarnish her reputation!” Baelin clenched his fist, and even his face turned red.

“Oh, love. Love! How beautiful it is! How vibrant, for it to even attract a moth into the flames! To make cowardly little lambs turn into savage, mighty beings!”

Leylin chanted some proverbs, and without waiting for Baelin to ask, he continued, “While Miss Venus was wearing coarse clothing, although she had tried her best to hide it, there was still the smell of cheaply-priced perfume. It’s not from today, and there’s still some eyeshadow on her face. Her handkerchief is a good quality product from Old Walker’s shop; she seems to have too much money... In just that short contact with her, she seemed to have tried to entice me at least three times! This must be some occupational habit...”

With every sentence that came out from Leylin’s mouth, Baelin felt like a sledgehammer had struck his chest, and he fell back.

However, Leylin continued on with a fatal blow, “If I’m not wrong, you might find Miss Venus at midnight at the well-known Night Warbler alley...”

“No! What you said can’t be true!”

Baelin’s face distorted, but his pale expression evidently meant that he believed Leylin’s words. He was stunned and suddenly roared, dashing out of the door.

“Hehe... The senseless dreams of youths!” Leylin laughed, having a great time.

“It’s really quite fun to destroy fantasies and let youths find out about the cruelty of life as soon as possible!”

Longbottom quickly returned with two very red handprints on his face. He didn’t say anything to Leylin and began his daily work.

As for Baelin, that poor fellow was said to have drank at a bar for an

entire night. He only came to the shop the next day but was chased out by Leylin, who looked at him in disdain, wanting him to take care of the lingering smell of alcohol, lest he wouldn't need to return.

Boom!

Seeing the last piece of metal moved to the storeroom, Longbottom, who was riddled with scars finally sighed with relief, glancing at Leylin with expectant eyes.

"Youngster, you're smart and can persevere! From hereon, I declare that you are able to come to my shop for five minutes every day when nobody is around, and browse my products."

Leylin tried his best to resist his laughter while announcing.

"Huh?" Longbottom raised his head, stunned.

"What's wrong? Did you think I would take you in as my disciple and help you become a knight, and then you'd be a head above the rest, marry a princess, and live happily ever after?"

Leylin had on a teasing smile, "Kiddo, you're still too immature."

Longbottom turned pale in embarrassment now that his plan had been seen through.

"You liar! You're a liar!" He yelled, and quickly ran out.

Pak! As he had run too quickly, he had tripped by the road and fallen onto the ground, getting soil all over him.

"Haha!" "Haha..." "Come look! Isn't that the fool from Blazing Hammers?"

The pitiful sight of Longbottom attracted the unfeeling attention of the passersby.

Under their ridicule, Longbottom yelled and frantically left as soon as he could.

Leylin supported his weight by the door, beaming as he watched.

"Boss, you're so mean! No, you're terrible!" Baelin stood behind Leylin

with dark circles under his eyes. His face had become gaunt as he muttered at Leylin.

“Hehe... It’s not like this is the first day since you became acquainted with me!” Leylin shrugged and came to the backyard.

He produced a black cross blade, the design of which was extremely similar to the Meteor long sword designed by the A.I. Chip. However, there were no energy waves emanating from this sword at all.

This was the imitation that Leylin had made using the design for the Meteor” sword. Only the outer appearance and weight were similar, and there were no energy runes or anything of the sort within.

“Hah!” Leylin lifted the blade and thrust forward, doing a move that looked like it came straight out of a textbook!

The sharp blade slashed out and cut the air, producing a piercing, explosive sound.

Though the Meteor long sword had yet to be made, Leylin had begun to make preparations beforehand so that he could get used to the weapon quicker.

Thrust! Slash! Strike!

Leylin suddenly turned into multiple figures on the ground, each of which held poses that were paused in mid-air.

At the end, Leylin leaped, “Cross Slash!”

A huge cross streaked across a huge rock in the area.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Under Leylin’s Cross Slash, the rock turned into four large parts.

“This...” Baelin was dazed at Leylin’s terrifying might and gaped like a huge toad.

“I’ve seen the knights from the baron’s residence attack, but their offensive power isn’t to this extent. Could Master Leylin be a legendary Grand Knight?”

Baelin was so stunned that he could not even close his mouth.

“What? Do you want to learn?” Leylin picked up a white towel and wiped his hands. Seeing Baelin in this state, he smiled and asked.

“Yes! ...No, I... Don’t...” Baelin was confused, and his speech became incoherent.

“So? Do you want to, or do you not want to?” Leylin grinned.

Baelin only managed to react after a long while, still disbelieving that he would get such an opportunity. He was afraid of being cheated by Leylin. “Boss! Oh, no, master! I mean, I’m already 19 and I’m quite old. I’ve never had any official training and can only recognise a few words. Isn’t it best to start training to become a knight as soon as possible? If you want a disciple, I think Longbottom is even more suitable than I am...”

Though he said this, Baelin’s breathing became rough in the face of such a huge temptation.

“If you really want a reason, there’s only one.” Leylin spoke slowly, and Baelin’s ears couldn’t help but perk up.

“Because I’m happy! Is this reason enough?”

Leylin beamed. Warlocks were really quite impulsive beings.

In addition, Leylin felt that it wasn’t good to keep suppressing the emotions of a warlock. He needed to find some way to vent, and since he found Baelin pleasing to the eye, he decided to do as he wished.

“Alright! In the face of such a mighty reason, Baelin could only laugh helplessly.

“If Longbottom found out that this was the reason, he’d definitely cry himself to death!” Baelin thought inwardly.

“So? Do you want to learn?”

“Of course! I do!” Baelin agreed right away. He would be an idiot if he were to reject at this point!

Pak! A wooden sword was thrust, striking Baelin’s face.

This poor guy collapsed, finding it difficult to climb back up.

“Your footwork is too slow. You need to ensure your footsteps and breath are in sync. Understood?”

Leylin was dressed in black as he stood in front of Baelin, “Get up!”

“Un-understood, my lord!” Baelin sucked in a cold breath and was somewhat able to get up. Leylin had been controlling his strength well; he had used just enough strength to cause Baelin pain, but not inflict internal injuries.

When Leylin had first agreed to train him, Baelin had planned to call Leylin ‘Mentor’, but Leylin naturally did not want a disciple, and had rejected his idea without a second thought.

After an hour of swordplay practice, they came to the breathing method.

“For knights, what they are training is their life energy, which is also known as their life essence!” Leylin instructed with zeal.

“About 5cm below the lower abdomen, in an inverted triangle area. This is where we think we can cultivate the spirit. Training to become a knight happens by manipulating the frequency of breathing, adjusting the secretions within the body, and hence producing more life essence.”

Leylin began to impart his knowledge regarding the cross blade breathing technique, which he had reorganised, to Baelin.

He was now extremely knowledgeable, and the information stored in his mind was plentiful. He also had experience from grooming his Branded Swordsmen. He had simply optimized his Farlier Family’s Cross Blade breathing technique and had upgraded it quite a bit.

Based on Leylin’s estimations, his version of the breathing technique could probably be considered the best, even amongst Grand Knights.

Chapter 297: Baelin And The Girl

“Breathe out! Breathe in! Focus! Pay attention to the frequency!”

Baelin had taken off his shirt, revealing some muscle that he had gained after all these days of training. He sat cross-legged, closed his eyes, and inhaled deeply; the muscles on his body shook as he breathed.

“No, your abdominal muscles are moving incorrectly!” With a swing of his arms, a wooden sword mercilessly hacked at Baelin’s lower abdomen.

Baelin’s face twisted, and the muscles there withdrew. Hah! Two white streams of air exited from his nostrils.

“Remember it? This is the feeling!”

Leylin patted using the wooden sword.

“Hah...” After training a complete round in the breathing method, Baelin expelled a long breath, some black impurities could be found in the white gas that he let out. He opened his eyes.

“Are you a pig? It took you ten days to understand the surface of this simple breathing technique!”

Leylin scolded, and Baelin could only rub his head and laugh, continuously apologising.

After so many days of training, he could feel the sturdiness of his body increasing. With the help of the breathing technique, he could begin to feel some warmth flowing in his body.

The intoxicating feeling he gained from achieving power made Baelin addicted to it. Even if Leylin wanted to kill him now, he wouldn’t leave no matter what.

“Go. A thousand times of the sword swings, and five thousand squats!” Leylin pointed, and Baelin immediately complied.

“I didn’t think that this random fellow that I decided to teach would actually have some talent!”

The corner of Leylin’s lips curved up into a smile as he watched Baelin

perspire in the small field.

Baelin was evidently suited to the path of the knight. If Leylin had not used the A.I. Chip, Baelin might not even be able to scratch the surface of the improved cross blade breathing technique in ten days and grasp life essence. However, he had done it!

“However, I’ve never really had the talent to become a knight. In comparison, this speed would probably mean Baelin is an unprecedented talent! I wonder how his spiritual aptitude is?”

The spiritual aptitude of regular people was not very obvious. Unless he had access to specific spells or supplementary tools, even Leylin could not tell the talent that one had for magic.

“It looks like I have to stay here for a period of time...”

Leylin’s expression darkened. Though he had planned on looking for other Magi, the sudden explosion of his emotions due to his Warlock blood had delayed his schedule.

Leylin could only use a few common methods to slowly let out the emotions in his heart. Also, he could only brew a few potions of a higher grade than the potion of tranquility to suppress his symptoms.

His plans after arriving in the Twilight Zone would be related to the obtaining of high-grade meditation techniques. He would not allow himself to wander around while he was still in this highly emotional state. If he did, there was an 80% chance that things would turn out like when he was robbing the essence of the Wisdom Tree and incited the anger of multiple people, who then chased after him.

Unwittingly, six months passed.

Without knowing it, since the whole process was so smooth, Baelin activated the life energy in his body and became a real knight.

This miserable fellow saw that he was unable to withstand even one move from Leylin and thought that he was still a regular human. Therefore, he worked hard towards his goal of becoming a knight. The one effect of his becoming a Knight was being able to withstand one strike

from Leylin before collapsing.

As for Longbottom, Leylin did not see him anymore. It was said that that kid, who was unwilling to admit failure, had followed a bunch of traders going to trade at a city, and was hoping to get lucky.

It was a pity that Leylin had seen plenty of youngsters struggling outside with their dreams in mind. Out of a hundred, ninety would die without reason, and the majority of the remainder would become beggars, disabled, thieves, or criminals.

Only one percent would be successful.

Leylin had listened to Baelin talk about this for a while and had thrown this matter to the back of his mind.

“Hah!”

Baelin brandished the large steel sword in his hand, the blade glinting with a cold, sharp light, roaring as he charged towards Leylin.

“Kill!” He struck with his large sword, which in its wake brought a fierce gale.

On the other hand, Leylin was holding a wooden sword and shook his head, “Too many excess movements!”

With just a gentle thrust forward, the wooden sword entered the metallic rays of light.

What seemed to be a gentle, slow attack from the wooden sword pushed Baelin’s steel sword away, and the wooden sword pierced Baelin’s armpit!

“Ugh...” Baelin groaned and collapsed.

“Disappointing! Too disappointing!” Leylin bluntly struck him down.

During his free time after researching, he would tease this guy. It was one of the many pleasures he had in his spare time.

“My lord, can’t you let me win a little?”

Baelin huffed and puffed, complaining as he sat on the ground, “I’m always defeated in one blow! Gosh! I feel like I haven’t been improving at

all...”

“Stop with the nonsense! Continue training. To punish you for being unable to withstand one move, you are to do a thousand more push-ups!”

Leylin tried his best not to laugh as he showed a poker face.

In fact, Baelin was improving extremely quickly. He was on the verge of advancing to become a Grand Knight. On one hand, this had to do with the effectiveness of the breathing method Leylin had provided. On the other, Baelin’s talent and diligence could not be disregarded.

Leylin reclined on a deck chair, watching Baelin sweating, but his thoughts were all on the A.I. Chip.

[Beep! Based on the real-time monitoring, host body’s secretion of adrenaline is at a low level, and mental status is becoming stable. Estimated to reach normal level in 341 hours!]

Through the diagrams and curve that the A.I. Chip analysed, Leylin was overjoyed to find that after all his efforts, his emotions were stabilising.

“Based on this pace, I’ll be able to completely suppress the explosion of my emotions in ten or so days...” Leylin grinned.

“Boss! Is the boss here?”

At this moment, a young man’s voice travelled over, “We want to buy something. Is the boss of Blazing Hammers around?”

Upon hearing this voice, Baelin stopped his training. “Oh, my heavens! There’s someone actually coming to boss’ shop? Has the sun risen from the west?”

Due to Leylin’s unconventional pricing, only a few items were sold every year despite the excellent quality of the weapons in the shop.

“What are you talking about! Go and entertain the customer!” Leylin’s sword knocked on Baelin’s head.

At this moment, Baelin remembered that his real identity was a worker employed to man the weapon shop. He immediately put on a white shirt and jogged out to receive the customer.

Leylin was a little curious and followed him out.

“My lady, please come in!”

Baelin seemed to be fawning over a girl of noble blood, who was wearing sophisticated clothing and had a ring with strange inscriptions on it. He made eyes at Leylin, indicating they were going to make a huge sale.

Behind this noble girl was an old man with silver hair that seemed to be a butler. Behind this man were two young guards wearing armour made of iron mail. The one who had shouted was evidently one of the guards.

On the shoulder of the guard, there was a large crest with sun vines adorning it. In the middle were a sword, shield, and a crown!

Leylin was learned in the area of the coat of arms, and naturally knew that no matter which society they were in, only the first-rate nobility were able to use a crown in their crest.

“Interesting! A daughter of a noble? She even has an acolyte and two knights protecting her!”

Leylin gazed at this group of people with interest. The butler behind the girl was obviously a level 3 acolyte, and he even had a low-grade magic artifact, judging from the energy waves it gave off.

The guards behind them were guards with the strength of knights.

Even this girl herself also produced undulations from energy particles and had the power of a rank 1 acolyte. All sorts of amplification type rings were on her fingers.

At this moment, the four guests were surprised at Baelin, who was treating them so politely—not every shop had a Knight that would service guests!

Baelin, who was still oblivious to everything, was politely introducing to the girl, “My lady, if you wish to go to the Woody Wasteland, I recommend this steel sword! Its workmanship is first rate, and there won’t be any nicks even after killing thousands. If you couple it with these arrowheads, it’s even more perfect...”

Baelin's saliva flew everywhere as he opened another cabinet, revealing a bunch of arrowheads that looked completely new and was giving off a turquoise luster.

This eagerly attentive display that might even be seen to be overly humble had Leylin laughing inside. The two soldiers behind the girl turned, a little embarrassed at seeing a knight just like them, who seemed to be tarnishing their reputation.

In fact, if not for their owner being right in front, they would long since have drawn their swords and taught this fellow who knew nothing about the dignity of knights a lesson.

"Look!" The noble girl spoke to the old butler behind her.

The butler with the strength of a level 3 acolyte went forward, touching the steel sword with his wrinkly hands and then touching the arrowhead, shock apparent on his face, "The quality is not bad! It can even be compared with the works of the Great Master Yoda."

"Oh?" The surprise was evident on this girl's face. This was the first time she had seen her butler praise any item, and even more so comparing it to Great Master Yoda? That was a Master who had earned a reputation in the eastern capital from forging weapons, and was extremely popular with the public!

"Who forged the weapons here?" She asked, looking at Baelin. After all, his bulging muscles were very enchanting.

Leylin, who concealed his power very well, was naturally ignored.

"Oh, those!" Baelin was about to brag about his boss, but upon seeing Leylin's warning look, he corrected himself, "That's obviously a secret!"

Chapter 298: Rescue

“Is that so?” The girl lifted her brows, and even Baelin couldn’t bear to keep eye contact.

“Please pass on this message to that great master! I would like to meet him, and our Argus Family welcomes him to our door!” She spoke in an aloof manner.

The guard behind her immediately took out a sculpture that looked similar to the crest on his shoulder and passed it to Baelin.

“This! This! And those arrows. We want them all!”

The girl pointed at the display cabinet.

“Alright, alright!” Baelin was so excited that he was flushed red. He didn’t even have the time to analyse the crest in his hand, and immediately packed up the swords and other weapons, passing them to the guards behind her.

“The total is 1050 Gold! Thank you for your patronage!”

Baelin nodded at the girl, and the butler passed a small bag of gold coins and a purple-gold card to him. Baelin was on the verge of becoming stupid as his hand trembled while holding the bag.

The girl saw his movements and a glint of mischievousness appeared in the young noble’s eyes.

“I wish to go to the Woody Wastelands! Can you be my guide? I’ll pay 10 Gold per day.”

“Ten-Ten Gold?” Baelin’s breathing became rough.

While working in Leylin’s shop, the pay was 3 Gold per month; this was already a pay grade that made the residents of Potter Town incomparably envious.

Ten Gold a day? This was something Baelin had never even dreamed of!

“But!” Baelin looked at Leylin and gritted his teeth as he rejected the suggestion. “My apologies, my lady! I must work here every day...”

Though Baelin wanted to make some quick money, he was still able to make a distinction between the present and the future.

Leylin was currently teaching him how to train to become a knight! This was only available in specific noble families of the Twilight Zone, and he would not have another chance to get it, even with over a thousand Gold!

If he gave this up just for a little Gold, that would mean giving up his future as a Knight; Baelin felt that he would completely regret that choice of action.

“Interesting, interesting! I never thought I’d discover such an intriguing shop on this trip!”

The girl laughed like a skylark.

“My name is Jenny, and I live in the largest inn in the town. If you change your mind, you can come look for me at any time.”

After the girl and her companions left, Baelin carefully placed the gold and purple-gold card on the table.

“The purple-gold card that is valued at a thousand Gold! It’s the first time I’ve ever seen this, and in addition, there are so many gold coins. My lord! We’ve struck it rich!” Baelin’s eyes were full of little stars.

“Yeah, yeah!” Leylin nodded, paying no mind as he kept the purple-gold card.

“The rest of the gold shall be yours as a commission!”

“Oh, boss, let me praise you! You’re really the master of fairness, the embodiment of compassion...” Baelin immediately began to cheer.

He tossed the crest up and down in his hand, puzzled. “This seems quite familiar! I recall hearing something about this Oscar Family from somewhere before...”

Suddenly, he shrieked, “Damn it! Sun Vine Argus! It’s the marquis family in the eastern capital! What did I just give up...”

However, although Baelin sighed, he did not pursue this matter any further.

After all, they weren't going to take him in as a servant, but only as a guide. It would be a very stupid decision to reject Leylin's teachings here.

The appearance of the Marquis' daughter here obviously made her the topic of conversation in Potter Town. Leylin could hear the latest news about this group from Baelin.

"My Lord! My Lord! Apparently, Miss Jenny came to this place in order to prepare to obtain a very special birthday gift for her mother! She's preparing to look for it in the wastelands. What a filial daughter she is!"

"Haha... I found out that Miss Jenny is looking for a special plant called the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud! It's said to help women maintain their looks for ten years, and can even be sold off at an auction in the eastern capital for almost a hundred thousand Gold! After offering a reward for it, all the adventurers, mercenaries and even residents of the town have begun to pour into the Woody Wastelands to look for it, dreaming of getting rich quickly!"

"My Lord! I just saw Miss Jenny entering the Woody Wastelands while being guided by the baron's knights..."

Baelin was as excited as a sparrow, chirping in front of Leylin; Leylin just rolled his eyes.

"Have you completed your homework for today?"

With that single sentence, Baelin completely quieted down and scratched his head.

"No, but I'll be done soon!" Having said this, Baelin quickly rushed to the training grounds and began to wave around a large sword that was about the height of a person.

"You still have the mind to think about running around outside of training. You seem to have a lot of excess energy!" Leylin grinned, "I'll multiply the tasks you have to do for today."

"Oh! No!" Hearing Baelin's anguished wailing, Leylin felt his mood improve.

“Oh, Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud?” Leylin touched his chin and searched up some information recorded by the A.I. Chip from the ancient ruins.

He seemed to have seen records about this sort of precious plant in ancient books. It was said that it lived in a very harsh environment and needed to coexist with a high energy being, taking in the blood of this being every once in awhile, or else it would wilt.

“I remember that the high-energy being coexisting with the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud is called the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon. It’s said to be a mix between an ancient dragon and some demon, though I have no idea how true that information is...”

Leylin pondered deeply, “In addition, the beautification effect of the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud is just a side effect. The main use of the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud is to combat specific toxins...”

“Interesting. I was just searching for a good reason to enter the eastern capital!” Leylin glanced at Baelin who was still wailing but did not dare stop training, a fierce light glinting in his eyes.

Three days later, a small group laden with injuries returned to Potter Town, bringing back horrifying news.

The team with the Marquis’ daughter had met with unexpected danger while chasing after the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon and were stuck somewhere. Even the baron’s knight team captain had sacrificed himself.

This team had risked their lives to return and seek help.

The entire town sank into terror. The fury of a Marquis was something Potter Town could not take on, and the person most afraid of the headstrong daughter were the owner of the area, Baron Joseph.

“My lord! My lord! I heard that...”

Baelin rushed into the yard like a gust of wind, to the sight of a plump man in luxurious clothes, constantly using a gold-coloured handkerchief to wipe the sweat on his face.

He was instantly like a duck held by the neck, his words stuck in his

throat as he bowed, "Hello, Sir!"

This plump man was obviously Baron Joseph, the man in charge of Potter Town. Even Baelin's current job had been introduced to him by this man. For Baelin, someone with land and an inheritance could be said to be an amazing person, and as a result, he was so shocked that he quickly greeted the baron, his head at his chest.

"So it's Baelin! Do your job well!"

Baron Joseph did not seem to have any interest in conversing with him, and instead bowed towards Leylin with a smile, "Well then, I'll leave it to you, Great Master Leylin!"

In order to settle down, Leylin had used mental spells as well as having left a very powerful image in Joseph's mind.

Hence, now that he had met with trouble that he could do nothing about, Joseph quickly came to Leylin as soon as he could.

"My lord! What happened?"

Baelin waited until Joseph left before asking.

"What else could it be other than to save that willful girl?" Leylin spoke indifferently, picking out a shining set of armour from the storeroom.

"Ooh, ooh! Oh! My lord, are you going to take action?"

As Leylin's shop assistant and semi-disciple, Baelin was very curious about Leylin's past and his power, extremely excited.

"Bring me, my lord! I'm sure you'll lack a servant in the Woody Wastelands, right?"

"Bring me! You have to bring me!"

Boom! A large set of Knight's armour was thrown at Baelin. "Try it on!"

"Oh! Alright!" Wearing armour was part of training to become a knight. Baelin had trained a lot, but it was his first time officially wearing armour. He was so excited that he was slightly flushed.

This shiny armour unexpectedly fit him very well. There were even some

patterns at the sides of the metal, and the leather plating underneath. Not only was it beautiful, it could also protect a few areas; Baelin loved it.

After training for such a long period of time, Baelin had also grown taller. He had beautiful muscles, and after wearing the armour, he looked extremely brave and courageous.

“How is it? I’m handsome, aren’t I?” Baelin patted his chest narcissistically, and two pieces of metal struck each other, producing a loud sound.

“Next!” Leylin tossed a steel sword to Baelin, and after he had worn and put everything into place, Leylin nodded in satisfaction.

“I can relax now!”

“Of course! Huh? Relax? What about?” Baelin was bewildered.

“Young man, the mission to save the princess will fall to you?” Leylin tried to hold back his laughter, patting Baelin’s shoulder while speaking in a heartfelt, meaningful manner. Baelin was stunned.

“Huh? Huh?! Me?! You want me to go to the Woody Wastelands alone?” Baelin finally reacted, pointing at his own nose.

“My lord, I’m not even a knight! Are you trying to kill me?”

“It can’t be helped!” Leylin spread his hands, “Someone must stay behind to look after the shop! Youngsters like you need to be more energetic!”

“My lord, forgive me for my being so direct about this, but you sell but a few items per year. It doesn’t make a difference whether you watch the shop or not. In addition, there’s a large difference between being energetic and sending myself to my death!”

Chapter 299: Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud

“Don’t worry. You’re my employee after all; I won’t just send you to your death like that.”

Leylin waved his arms, saying things that were not helping Baelin calm down.

“I’ve already received more information. Jenny and the rest were trapped in a valley by Explosive Flaming Wolves, and temporarily will not meet with any danger...”

“I even prepared this for you!” Leylin passed a bag of medicinal powder to Baelin.

Baelin curiously sniffed at it, and then choked, sticking out his tongue, “What is this?”

“Stimulating medicinal powder! It can cover the smell of your live body scent and prevent the Explosive Flaming Wolves from finding you.”

Leylin gave a brief explanation, and that alone caused Baelin to light up, looking at the bag in his hands like it was filled with gold coins.

“Think about it. If you sprinkle the powder on yourself and walk into the valley, you’ll be able to rescue the princess easily. Reputation, power, money and even beautiful girls – they’ll all be yours...” Leylin’s voice was enticing.

“But...” Baelin struggled, but his tone was already not as resolute as before.

“No buts!” Leylin looked serious.

“This is an order. Baron Joseph has given me the rights to authorise this. To save Jenny, I can give out orders to any peasant of Potter Town!”

Leylin glanced at Baelin, obviously with bad intentions, “I remember that you’re a free resident of Potter Town, am I right? Do you want to go now, or do you want to be demoted to a slave and then go?”

In the face of Leylin’s methods using both the carrot and stick, Baelin

could only raise his arms in protest, “All right, I’ll go!”

“That’s the way!” Leylin nodded in satisfaction.

That afternoon, Baelin had an expression like he was going to his death and, under the gazes of many residents of the town, he entered the Woody Wastelands.

Meanwhile, Leylin was lounging on a deck chair, his eyes closed as he took pleasure in the brightness given out from the sun stone. There was even a pot of hot tea and some snacks.

“A leisurely afternoon! I like this!”

Leylin contentedly poured himself a cup of black tea and blew away the rising steam.

“Shouldn’t the Explosive Flaming Wolves have long since migrated from the Woody Wastelands? And they bumped into them? This is getting increasingly interesting...”

He felt reassured sending Baelin. Not taking into consideration the fact that Baelin was just one step away from becoming a Grand Knight, just the powder Leylin had given him was enough for Baelin to return unscathed, as well as save Jenny and her companions.

“But this is just the start!”

Leylin had a feeling that the power struggle in the circle of aristocracy around Jenny had become very troublesome. It would involve everyone around her involuntarily.

However, this level of trouble was just like a few children playing house. If not for him feeling quite bored, as well as needing a reason to enter the eastern capital, he wouldn’t even bother playing with them.

The situation was just as Leylin predicted.

Two days later, Baelin energetically burst in, excitement apparent on his face.

“My lord, my lord, I did it! I successfully rescued Ms. Jenny and her companions! Haha... I’m a hero!”

“If you failed even with the powder I gave you, you’d be an idiot!” Leylin rolled his eyes, and then glanced at the entrance, “Are there customers?”

Next, Jenny, her butler, and the others walked in in a pitiful state. There was only one guard left, and his right arm was in a sling.

He could tell that they were in a difficult situation in the Woody Wastelands. However, they had directly come here without finding a chance to clean themselves first.

Though there was still some dust on her, Jenny’s face was still quite clean as she curtsied towards Leylin, “I heard from Baelin that it was all thanks to Sir that he was able to save me. Jenny is here to express her thanks! Sir’s powder is extremely miraculous, and even James couldn’t tell what the components were.”

“It’s nothing much. It’s part of my collection while I was still an adventurer!” Leylin put up his arm, evading any further explanations.

He was clear of the intentions this noble girl had in coming here. One part of this was to thank him, but more importantly, she was here to invite him to obtain the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud.

At this thought, Leylin shot a glance at Baelin.

Under his gaze, the young fellow ducked his head, embarrassed.

This naive young man betrayed Leylin after being taken in by Jenny and the rest, leaking the information that Leylin used to be a powerful adventurer.

“Mister...” Jenny’s smile was forced as she ground her teeth, kneeling on the ground, “Sir! I’m here for the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud. It’s not for my mother, but for my father. He...”

Then, there came the expected story of the power struggle between nobility.

The gist of it was that her two uncles coveted her father’s position as Marquis, and had used a strange toxin to harm him. In order to heal her father, this young girl had no choice but to bring her butler and guards to

search for a cure.

“Mister Leylin, my father is a benevolent and wise leader! If the title of Marquis and its associated territories were to fall into the hands of one of my uncles, the people under him would definitely meet with a calamity. Please help them...”

Jenny pleaded, giving a very thorough and brilliant act of a pure, kind-hearted innocent victim. Baelin had already clenched his fist, and Leylin kept shaking his head.

He naturally knew about the conflicts there were between the upper class. After growing up in that circle, even the most innocent child would be influenced.

Besides, could there be an absolute right or wrong in these power struggles?

On the surface, however, Leylin had a righteous expression, “I admire the kind and fair old Master Marquis. I am duty bound to help. Baelin!”

“Huh? Yes!” Baelin suddenly felt like something bad was going to happen. This was an intuition he had developed after being cheated by Leylin on countless occasions.

As expected, Leylin ordered, “Go accompany Miss Jenny and enter the Woody Wastelands again until you obtain the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud!”

“I knew it! I knew this would happen!”

Baelin roared in his heart, but upon seeing the grim look on Leylin’s face and the pitiful young girl, he could not bring it upon himself to reject.

“Alright then...”

Letting Baelin help was evidently not on Jenny and the others’ agenda. However, after seeing Leylin’s courteous but obvious refusal, this bright young girl knew it was impossible to get Leylin himself to act. She could only retreat regretfully.

“Can you tell if he’s a Magus?”

On the way, and after ensuring that there were no passers-by around them, Jenny spat out coldly. Her voice was cold, and her expression haughty. Where was that frail and delicate young girl seen only a few minutes back?

“I’m not sure. I couldn’t tell! If an official lord Magus really wants to conceal himself in front of me, I definitely won’t be able to tell at all!”

The butler, James, who was a level 3 acolyte, forced a laugh.

“Not being able to tell would be the best clue! A retired, powerful adventurer who was able to teach Baelin to become a knight in a year, his strength must be far beyond our imaginations!”

Jenny was astute.

“Not bad! I probed into this matter, and that young lad, Baelin, is quite lucky. The breathing technique he’s training in is at least that used by Grand Knights.”

James sighed in admiration. Upon hearing this, the eyes of the guard behind Jenny darkened.

He had risked his life for the Argus Family for so many years and gone through many loyalty tests before he was conferred a Knight’s breathing technique. He was only lucky enough to advance after bloody battles, and listening to this story gave him the urge to kill Baelin.

However, he quickly buried this at the bottom of his heart, not daring to think about this further.

Supporting Baelin was a lord who seemed to be an official Magus! Even the Argus Family would not dare offend him.

Though the Argus Family was a Marquis family with a high standing, this was only so by regular people’s standards.

In the eyes of Magi, the well-known Sun Vine Family was just as significant as a speck of dust.

Even in the entire Argus Family, there was only one rank 1 Magus whom they all respected. There was no need to choose who would be considered

more important, an official Magus or a guard who was just a Knight!

“My Lord!”

After Jenny and her companions left, Baelin immediately gazed at Leylin with tears in his eyes, like a puppy that had been abandoned.

“Give it to me!” He stretched his hands out.

“What?”

“That secret potion, which is a powerful treasure! Don’t you want me to obtain the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud?” Baelin thought it was only right that he received this.

Bang! He was struck heavily on the head by Leylin’s wooden sword, causing him to grimace from the pain.

“Baelin!” Leylin stood up, his tone sincere.

“After this experience, you should know where your strength lies, right?”

“Of course! Thanks to the guidance from my lord, I am now a Knight!”

Now that they were talking about business, Baelin’s expression became solemn. Though he had gotten past the pack of Explosive Flaming Wolves with Leylin’s powder, the Woody Wastelands had more dangers than just the wolves!

When he had split a large stork into two halves with a single strike, Baelin realised he had been played by Leylin. He had long since advanced to become a Knight!

In addition, through conversations with Jenny and the rest, he found out that Leylin had taught him very precious things!

Hence, though Baelin appeared frivolous out of habit, he revered Leylin more and more.

“Being a Knight is just the start, and it’s not the end!”

Leylin put his hands behind his back, putting on the airs of a powerful person.

Chapter 300: Goat-Horned Earth Dragon

“Your goal is to become a Grand Knight! The distant stars are your goal!”

Leylin’s voice was filled with emotion, causing Baelin’s blood to heat up.

“Though your Knight training method came from me and is said to be the best of the best even by the standards of Grand Knights, you lack something important that the strong possess!”

“The strong? Something important?” Confusion appeared on Baelin’s face.

“Exactly! That is real bloody battles and confidence. The Knights who lacked the training methods you have developed their unrivalled confidence through constant bloody battles, smoothly stimulating their life energy and becoming Knights! You lack this process...”

“Hence, you need to take on an even more difficult task to stimulate your potential!”

Leylin’s expression looked like he was trying to tell Baelin it was all for his own good. “How about it? Can you see what I’m doing for you?”

“Though I don’t understand, it seems cool!” Baelin clenched his fists, “I’ll work hard, my lord!”

Next, this little fool who had been duped by Leylin began to truly prepare to leave the following day.

Seeing him in a frenzy of preparation, Leylin shook his head as he gave a gentle smile.

“Youths really forget things quickly. He was duped so easily...”

However, to make use of Jenny, this noblewoman, to enter the capital, Leylin didn’t mind helping them.

“Your sword...” Leylin took Baelin’s steel sword, which he had been holding. Having gone through numerous forging, it still held a cold glint, but a chip the size of an ant had appeared on the blade.

This kind of nick could only be formed from countless strikes made by a

Knight using his full power. It was evident that Baelin had met with more dangers in the Woody Wastelands than just those Explosive Flaming Wolves.

“What’s wrong, my lord?” Baelin’s expression displayed his puzzlement.

“This sword is too old and not suitable for your expedition. I’ll give you a new one!” The corner of his lips lifted in a smile.

“Thank you! Thank you so much, my lord!” Baelin was so excited that he was almost incoherent in his gratitude.

After this battle, he finally discovered how difficult it was to groom a knight. On one hand, there was the secrecy of the breathing techniques, and on the other hand, there were the immense expenses in training and obtaining equipment.

Equipment forged by experts had a value of over 100 Gold. However, after explosively using his life essence a few times, a chip had appeared.

Wouldn’t regular weapons have simply snapped?

Knights grew through battles, and he wondered how many of these weapons would have to be used for this growth.

Baelin had originally intended to repair this sword and continue to use it. After all, he was used to living in poverty and couldn’t bear to waste resources. However, Leylin had simply given him another one!

“Don’t worry, I’ll send the bill to Ms. Jenny.”

However, Leylin’s next words caused Baelin’s grateful heart to burst into smithereens, “She’s the daughter of the Marquis and probably has more gold than their family will ever need. It doesn’t matter if they pay a little, right?”

Leylin tossed a new sword to Baelin.

“Aw, my lord! Can’t you let me continue to feel touched by your actions for a while longer?”

Baelin lamented, though his hands were not the least bit dissatisfied as he caught the sword.

Clang! Baelin gently caressed the sword, the blue edge of the blade having detailed, complicated patterns, and a cold air was emitted from it.

Based on his intuition after working here for so many years, Baelin could tell this was absolutely one of the best steel swords in the shop.

What he didn't notice was that before his lamenting, Leylin's palm had stroked the blade of the sword and left behind a dull red imprint.

This imprint had been carved into the sword itself and disappeared, and Baelin had not noticed at all.

.....

Jenny's team had rested and reorganized themselves in Potter Town and set off.

Though most of the adventurers and mercenaries who had followed her the last time had died or been injured, there was no lack of people who were so poor that they wanted to take the risk and strike it rich.

Jenny had simply given out a large amount of gold and gathered enough people. Of course, their strength was nothing much.

She had little choice. In Twilight Zone, the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon was a very rarely seen high-energy being. Only recently had people found traces of it in the Woody Wasteland.

If she let this opportunity go, she had no idea when she would get another chance to come across it.

Even if Jenny could wait, Marquis Argus – who was being tormented by poison – could not wait that long!

“Baelin, we're depending on you!” There was another person in the group, and it was Baelin in his new armour. He had repaired it through the night, and he was somewhat able to continue using it. On his back was the sword that Leylin had messed with, giving him a very brave and formidable aura, and even caused some girls in the town to throw him coquettish glances.

Now, however, with just a word from Jenny, Baelin was elated.

Feeling the reverence of the adventurers around him, as well as the ardent pleas from the noble girl, Baelin felt like he had downed several bottles of strong alcohol, and was beginning to feel giddy.

“I never imagined I, Baelin, would have such an impressive moment!” Baelin nodded as he glanced at Jenny, admiration apparent in his gaze, “Don’t worry, I’ll definitely obtain the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud!”

“Sigh, that pitiful fellow!”

Seeing Baelin so crazy over his young miss, James, who was standing to one side, couldn’t help but sigh under his breath.

So what if he was a Grand Knight? With the might of the Argus Family, they could easily summon a dozen of them! The person they really cared about was Sir Leylin, the person backing Baelin!

In Twilight Zone, only the mysterious lord Magi were suitable for his young miss to bow her head to.

“In addition, our young miss is an acolyte! Though her level is low, not just any regular person can do it.”

James sighed even more deeply.

The aptitude to become a Magus was a very mysterious thing. However, after many years of research, Magi found that if one of the parents was a Magus, there was a high likelihood that their descendants would have an increased aptitude. If both were Magi, the chances of acolytes could even rise up to 33%!

In addition, within this group of acolytes, there was a higher chance of them having outstanding talent.

For this reason, unless there were exceptions, any females in noble families who had the aptitude to become a Magus were not allowed to marry outside of their family. Their only fate was to marry their close relatives and produce an heir who would have greater aptitude!

The Argus Family might be happy to have a female peasant with an aptitude to become a Magus marry into the family. However, they would

absolutely not tolerate it if Magi in their family married outside, even if they were merely acolytes!

Of course, neither Baelin nor Jenny was thinking that far.

Even Baelin himself had automatically gotten serious after entering the Woody Wasteland, blindly hurrying in order to preserve energy.

He had grown up in Potter Town and naturally knew of the terrors here. Many areas that seemed to be safe ground might take the lives of any adventurer at any time.

He was Baelin, someone about to become a Grand Knight! How could he die here?

“There’s something in front!”

All of a sudden, the team in front cheered, and Baelin immediately braced himself, approaching them.

“We discovered this! Come take a look!”

Jenny had changed into garments suitable for hunting and now looked more capable and experienced. She was now pointing at a large footprint on the ground as if she had seen some treasure.

Baelin crouched down. In front of him was a footprint almost a metre long.

The owner had left a very deep footprint, with four claw marks sunk deeply into the ground.

“There are five joints in the middle toe, and the smell is correct. This is it! This was left behind by a Goat-Horned Earth Dragon!”

James had also approached them. After using some strange item in his hands to probe it, he spoke to Jenny with conviction.

“What are we waiting for?”

She had a smile on her face. Though her target was right in front of her, she did not impatiently forge ahead.

“We’ll find a place to set up camp for today! All scouts are to move out

and follow the footprint, and you must find the lair of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon!”

Jenny’s purpose in coming here was to obtain the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon. This special plant only coexisted with the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon, and it was hence necessary that they find its lair.

“I shall reward anyone who can find the lair of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon with a hundred gold coins!”

In order to find the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud as soon as possible, Jenny did not mind giving out large rewards, and it immediately resulted in loud roars.

Many adventurers who were originally not scouts left as well, wanting to try their luck. If they received this reward, and if combined with their own savings, they could practically retire already.

“They...” Baelin had a look on his face that showed he couldn’t bear to watch these adventurers leave.

He was not an idiot. In contrast, he was rather intelligent and knew Jenny’s intention in doing that.

These adventurers lacked strength or any special abilities. Their only function was to act as cannon fodder and bait!

Now that they had entered the territory within which the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon was active, they would inevitably attract its action with all these adventurers running around.

They would be able to find the dragon as long as they followed the blood-curdling screams or blood.

“It can’t be helped, Baelin!” Jenny laughed bitterly, “I’ll make it up to their families later...”

When the sun descended, three people did not return.

Jenny was overjoyed as she chased in the direction that the three had moved in.

“Here!” Baelin picked up a rock on the floor, his expression complicated as he looked at the blood stains and some bits of cloth on that stone.

Chapter 301: Pursuit

Under the bright, flickering torchlight, there were traces of the chaos that had occurred, such as blood and remnant flesh.

It was obvious that before having its meal, the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon had toyed with its food.

At this sight, the faces of the adventurers around darkened.

Outside of this site, there was a long line of bloodstains, causing it to appear as a bloody trail.

“Follow it!”

With Jenny’s command, the group lifted their torches and did as asked.

Twilight Zone was underground and was shrouded in darkness all year around. However, the surviving humans had yet to evolve and have night vision, thus, torches were one of the essential items when exploring in the Twilight Zone.

“The footprints are more concentrated here!”

Baelin lifted his torch with one hand, the other tightly grasping the handle of his steel sword. His joints had turned a little white from using too much strength.

A piercing stench was beginning to pervade the air, to the point that Baelin associated it with the time he had worked at a horse stable when he was younger.

Next, with the illumination by everyone, a small hill made of black rocks appeared. At the foot of the hill was a large cave that extended deeply into the side, hollowing it out.

“We can’t fight it in its lair. We need to lure it out!”

Jenny decided after looking.

With this dim lighting, it was bound to affect the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud if they were to fight in the small lair. If the bud was damaged, there would be no point even if Jenny and the rest killed the dragon.

“Don’t worry, the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon has very low intelligence and is very sensitive to the smell of blood. We can use that and set up a trap.”

James stood out at this moment and under his command, the adventurers set up a simple trap outside the cave.

As resources were limited and they couldn’t alert the Earth Dragon inside, James chose the simplest trap – poison!

A black being that looked like a goat was forced to drink an entire bottle of a red potion, and was laid across the cave. Its four legs were tied together, and its main artery was slashed open causing fresh blood to spurt out. A small puddle of blood was quickly formed on the ground.

The adventurers beside it had long since put out their torches and patiently waited aside, not even daring to breathe loudly at this point.

Baelin’s hands were on his sword, glancing at Jenny, who was extremely nervous, and James, who looked grim. He himself looked determined.

Thud thud! Thud thud!

Only ten or so minutes passed, but in the hearts of everyone present, it felt like centuries had passed. Finally, just when the adventurers were beginning to get impatient, dull footsteps and slight tremors of the ground could be felt.

“It’s here! Get ready!”

The adventurers who were lying in wait outside ducked their heads, retrieving their weapons and bow and arrows, aiming them at the mouth of the cave.

“Hah...”

The sounds of heavy breathing resounded, followed by an increase of the concentration of the strange smell by more than ten times! The goat that was bait could only give a miserable shriek.

Crunch! Crunch!

Along with the sounds of chewing, the bleating of the goat stopped.

“Is this the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon?” As he was now a Knight, Baelin’s eyesight was very good. With just the faint light, he could somewhat see the figure of this monster.

This monster was about fifteen to sixteen metres long, and its four thick limbs supported its large body, its sharp claws scratching out a long straight line on the ground.

Above its yellow eyes, two curved black horns were grown, like the symbol of a demon.

With the opening and closing of its mouth, sharp teeth constantly meshed together and chewed the goat into bits, flesh and blood flying.

“On my command. Go!”

James swung his arm, and a rock the size of a fist was thrown to the side of the dragon.

Rumble!

Next, large amounts of light and warmth were produced from the stone, like a sun that had fallen to the earth.

Radiance dispelled the darkness and descended upon this piece of land.

“Roar... roar...”

Under the intense glare of the sunlight, the adventurers present closed their eyes, tears on the verge of falling.

The Goat-Horned Earth Dragon that was used to a life in darkness roared instantly became enraged.

“Quick! It has now been temporarily blinded. Move!”

Baelin was clear that when these beings used to the darkness suddenly came into contact with light, they would definitely be blinded for a period of time due to not being used to it, and this was the best time for them to make their move!

Besides, the function of the sun stone was to fill the area with light, which made it more helpful in allowing the group of them to exhibit their

abilities!

“To create this chance, Potter Town gave out a year’s supply of sun stones. What a waste!”

There were definitely many adventurers who thought the same way as Baelin, but this thought passed through their minds for a brief moment. Then they roared, brandishing the weapons in their hands and charged towards the huge monster in the middle of the site.

Under the illumination of the light, even the brown scales and veins on the muscles on the back of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon could be seen very clearly.

Xiu Xiu!

The first to attack was a group of mercenaries with bows and arrows. They were obviously a team, wearing a set of uniform with ice-cold glints of their iron arrows being emitted.

The sharp arrowheads brought with them tremendous force as they pierced into the back of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon.

Ka-cha! The Earth Dragon constantly snarled, and most of the arrows were flung away. However, there were a few that obstinately stayed on its back.

“Kill!” By this point, the adventurers had also charged to the front.

“Roar, roar!” The dragon thundered, suddenly turning back and flicking its tail!

The tail was like a large mace sweeping across the area, and the mercenaries that charged up flew away. A few were struck by the tail, and their blood dyed the sky.

“What an astute sense of hearing and smell!” Baelin exclaimed in admiration. The eyes of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon were very small and had almost completely degenerated. With the sudden piercing bright light, it couldn’t see anything at all, but all beings that lived in the darkness naturally had their unique ways of distinguishing other objects.

Baelin stepped away, dodging the sweeping motion of the steel tail and raised his sword, a thin ring of light produced around him.

“Cross Blade!” In a moment, he used Leylin’s secret killing technique for cross blades.

The immense light formed a cross, slashing towards the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon that was still snarling.

The fierce, immense air pressure attracted the attention of the Earth Dragon and it lifted its right forelimb, mercilessly clawing in Baelin’s direction!

Large black claws clashed with the cross-shaped light, and the sound of glass shattering could be heard in the air.

“Roar...” The Earth Dragon kept snarling, its large black claws disintegrating the move and smacking towards Baelin.

“How powerful and quick!” Baelin exclaimed in admiration and used his sword as a shield in front of him.

Dang!

The large claw and steel sword clashed, producing a loud sound and shock wave. Baelin felt an immense force transmitting from the sword and the sword was almost sent flying.

“Ah!” He gritted his teeth, holding onto the sword for dear life, using the force from the dragon to fall back.

Roar! The Earth Dragon was clearly enraged, once again brandishing its steel tail and chopping two mercenaries that had charged forward in two!

The two mercenaries howled, their halved bodies still squirming on the ground, intestines spilling out onto the ground. This gory scene immediately intimidated the rest of the mercenaries and adventurers and they retreated, not daring to take a step forward.

“What should we do? James, that Goat Honed Earth Dragon is almost about to return to its cave. We need to think of a way!”

“Soon! Soon!” James now had his eyes fixed on the dragon, constantly

chanting.

“Roar!”

At that moment, the body of the Earth Dragon that had almost halfway returned suddenly changed! Bubbles of pus began to swell and burst, revealing yellow pus.

“Woo woo...” The Earth Dragon’s voice became low and it began to wail in anguish.

“This is a high-energy bacteria solution especially brewed for the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon. It can lower the defence of its epidermis!”

James briefly explained to Jenny, quickly chanting some incantations.

A powerful undulation from energy particles was constantly produced from the old man, who had only seemed to be a butler.

“This is... a mysterious expert! So, Lord James is actually an esteemed Magus!” The adventurers around exclaimed.

In the subterranean world, Magi were widely known and worshipped.

“Mostar Corrosive Ball!” As the incantations ended, James waved his right arm.

A large blue ball arced in the sky, precisely landing on the back of the dragon.

The blue ball spread out, turning into large amounts of sky blue liquid that mixed with the yellow pus. Immediately, it produced a large amount of heat and began to corrode downwards.

“Roar!” The Earth Dragon’s pitiful shrieks increased in pitch, and large amounts of steamed flesh fell from its back.

“What are you waiting for? This is the moment where its defence is at its weakest!”

James placed his hands behind him, looking like an expert. The adventurers seemed to have just awoken from a dream and charged forward once again.

This time, with James' work, the Earth Dragon's speed dropped, and the skin and scaly defensive layer had mostly disappeared. The mercenaries could easily slash and create a gaping wound with their weapons.

In just a moment, the entire situation was reversed.

Chapter 302: Breakthrough

“Wooh wooh...”

Under this attack, the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon kept howling and suddenly turned. Uncaring of the serious injuries it had sustained and the people who were pursuing and attacking it, it crawled back into the cave!

“This is bad! It wants to escape!”

Jenny cried out in alarm, and she immediately brought out the bow and arrows which seemed hand-made, that had been on her back.

She took out a green arrow from her quiver, resting it on the bow.

Weng! Weng! Weng!

One after another, the various rings she had on her hand began to light up.

“Precise Aim!” “Keen Edge!” “Gale Technique!”

All sorts of buffs were applied to Jenny.

“Miss-Miss Jenny is also a Magus?!” Baelin, who was not far away, gaped, thinking he might be in a dream.

Xiu!

Jenny released the arrow in her hand, and a streak of green flew from the bow.

Pu! The green arrow of light struck an eye of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon, resulting in a large amount of red, greenish blood spurting out.

“Roar!!!” The Earth Dragon turned back sharply, charging in Jenny’s direction.

“Good! This is it!” Jenny’s expression revealed her excitement.

“No, leave!” On the other hand, James at the side had paled.

“Roar!” The Goat-Horned Earth Dragon thundered, spitting out a black ball of light.

The large ball of light exploded mid-air, black droplets of flames sprinkling everywhere.

“Ah!” “My eyes!”

The black droplets landed on the mercenaries’ bodies, instantly causing serious injuries. The many adventurers began to howl, and the circle which surrounded the dragon immediately had a hole.

Hah! Hah! The Goat-Horned Earth Dragon stimulated its energy to every part of its body and it swelled, and its skin turned red.

Its speed rapidly increased and it charged in front of Jenny.

“Protect the miss!” The one surviving guard brandished his sword with his left arm and dashed forward.

Ka-cha! The Earth Dragon opened its mouth full of sharp fangs and biting down, it had the knight in its mouth, constantly chewing. Blood and flesh fell from the gaps between its teeth.

“Ah...” Jenny was so shocked that her legs buckled, and she fell to the ground.

She was but a level 1 acolyte. That attack with the bow was only effective with the bonus from all the rings she had. After that attack, the pitiful amount of spiritual force she had was almost exhausted, and it was not possible to pull off another attack.

Jenny was now a fragile, helpless girl of the nobility as she was paralyzed on the ground, awaiting her unknown future.

“Awool!” The Goat-Horned Earth Dragon did not have any thoughts of taking pity on her, opening its mouth wide. With its sharp teeth filled with flesh and blood, it snapped its jaws and made to bite her.

“Am I going to die? I’m sorry, Father...” Jenny’s mouth was half open, a teardrop rolling from her right eye.

Dang!

The acute pain she had been expecting did not appear, and Jenny opened her eyes, stunned. All she saw was a strong figure in front of her.

“Hey! In Knight stories, there will always be a knight appearing whenever the princess is in trouble, right?”

Baelin laughed, ruthlessly chopping forward with the sword in his hands!

The large steel sword hacked at the surface of the dragon’s head, producing some sparks. Baelin bellowed, life essence bursting out. On the surface of the armour, there seemed to be a protective layer formed of light.

Roar!

The Earth Dragon retreated a few steps, snarling at Baelin.

“Oh my! This is the real life version of a brave knight fighting against the evil dragon!” Baelin shot a glance at Jenny behind him, and then took a look at how much life essence he had left, a helpless smile about his lips.

Whoosh!

A black figure constantly attacked the Earth Dragon, and everyone else could only see the dust flying at the centre of the site, as well as the constant howls from the dragon.

Under the immense pressure from the Earth Dragon, Baelin felt all that Lord Leylin had forced him to learn suddenly bursting out as he became more proficient at some techniques.

At this moment, he suddenly felt empty, as if he had lost all of the power he just had.

“The burst of power from the secret technique is used up, and my life essence has been exhausted!”

Baelin’s heart sank, and a black shadow like a steel mace pierced through the armour of light, mercilessly slamming on his chest.

Ka-cha! The steel armour caved in, and Baelin flew backwards, a large amount of blood spilling from the corner of his mouth.

“No!”

At the moment he was about to die, he seemed to see the gigantic shadow of the Earth Dragon, as well as heard a sorrowful wail.

“What a short life! However, I have no more regrets!”

With a gentle smile, he froze into his image of Jenny crying hard while on the ground into his memory.

“How can my student die in such a pointless way?”

Just as Baelin was about to fall unconscious, time seemed to stop, and his surroundings turned black and white. His body seemed to be stuck in mid-air.

“It’s Lord Leylin’s voice! He’s finally acknowledged me as his student!” Baelin was overjoyed, his thoughts on this while he was on the verge of death.

Next, he felt the steel sword on his right hand constantly becoming warmer till it became burning hot as if he was holding a soldering iron.

Weng Weng! The sword constantly shook, and a crimson rune appeared on its own accord on the blade.

“Ahh!”

Baelin felt a stream of heat being transmitted from the steel sword, rushing to his lower abdomen where his life essence was congregated.

Bang! Like the sound of a bottle exploding, the bottleneck to becoming a Grand Knight – the issue which had been bothering Baelin for a long period of time – was crossed!

Life energy that was at least ten times more powerful than before congregated from the life essence at his lower abdomen, and flowed through Baelin’s limbs.

“Shaaa!”

Baelin held his sword and slashed forward. On the surface of the steel sword, red rays from the rune suddenly brightened, and the sheen from a sword streaked through the sky, appearing in front of the Earth Dragon.

Under the black and white rays that had frozen time, the Earth Dragon was motionless, allowing Baelin to aim a slash at its neck.

Whoosh!

A cold wind blew, and the black and white faded, returning to the usual colourful world.

Ka-cha!

A fine red line appeared at the Earth Dragon's neck.

This line began to spread till it covered the entire neck, and then reddish-green blood constantly flowed out, the gigantic head of the beast fell to the ground.

Rumble! After losing its head, the huge body of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon crashed to the ground, like a little earthquake, causing a large amount of dust to fly.

"What happened to him?" Jenny felt a little dizzy.

"He broke through! He broke through the bottleneck of a Grand Knight!" James mumbled to himself, and then helped Jenny up.

"Haha, I knew I was a genius! How could I just die like this!"

Baelin, who had escaped death, patted his chest and began to laugh.

Seeing him in this state, Jenny felt there was a fire in her chest, almost causing it to explode.

"You idiot!" Jenny threw a white handkerchief at Baelin's face. Leaving him alone, she entered the cave with James.

"Why is she being like this?" Baelin held the handkerchief in a daze, bewildered.

The surviving mercenaries and adventurers silently cleaned the area.

They had lost a lot of people, and many of them were their friends or even family!

It was very quiet on the battlefield, and not one animal came to disturb the silence.

The sun's rays were extremely annoying for the beings that were used to the darkness. Potter Town of Twilight Zone had made use of this aversion and used the sun stones to disperse the creatures of darkness, and could thus develop.

James had considered this at the beginning when he threw out the sun stones.

Ten minutes later, Jenny and James came out with excitement.

"Is this the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud?"

Baelin noticed the plant that seemed like a flower in Jenny's hands.

This red flower was the size of a bowl, and there were webs that seemed like blood vessels and veins on the petals. It looked very bizarre.

Jenny carefully held the flower bud, as if she were holding some treasure that was as valuable as a city.

"Yes! With this, my father can be saved..." Jenny finally relaxed.

Ever since her father had been poisoned, immense pressure had been put on the shoulders of this young girl. Now, she could finally heave a sigh of relief.

"Thank you!" Jenny was so emotional that she hugged Baelin, leaving him stunned at the spot.

"And all of you!" Jenny turned back to the adventurers and mercenaries, "Your loyalty and devotion to your role has earned you your rewards! I will give out twice the amount promised, and five times that for those who have died!"

"Thank you so much, my lady!" "A kind and generous person!" "May the lord of darkness protect you!"

As expected, Jenny's declaration made everyone present cheer.

They packed up and began their journey back.

On the way back, Baelin kept swinging the steel sword in his hand, wanting to find any strange marks on it. However, after that one burst, this

sword had used up all its energy, and no matter how much Baelin prodded it, it did not exhibit any strange features.

“What a fool! However, only a person with a one-track mind like him is suitable for my cross blade breathing technique!” Baelin’s actions were all seen by Leylin, who was in Potter Town, through a transparent crystal, and he shook his head.

Beside him, a test tube full of reddish green liquid was thrown aside like rubbish.

“There’s not even a sliver of a powerful bloodline in there! To think it even had the word “dragon” in its name!” Leylin sighed.

Chapter 303: Farewell

Not all myths and folklore were true.

On the contrary, many myths have been altered, some even to the extent of the subjective thoughts of the storyteller, hence they were unusually laid with errors.

Only Leylin's A.I. Chip could analyse and sieve out the most accurate version of the myth from the myriad of mythological information available.

As for now, after the blood analysis of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon, Leylin discovered that there wasn't a single trace of an ancient bloodline in it's blood!

Evidently, the myth of the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon being borne from a giant dragon and another demonic creature was false!

However, Leylin did not harbour much hope from the start. Even if the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon were to contain traces of an ancient bloodline, this strength that did not even reach the stage of an official Magus did not fit his requirements at all.

Back in Nightless City, he was clear that even if he could obtain and purify the blood from creatures that contained an ancient bloodline, the creature had to be of a certain level to be of use.

As for this standard, after the analysis from the A.I. Chip, the conclusion was that these creatures needed to have the strength to at least rival a rank 3 Magus!

In other words, even if the Goat Horned Earth Dragon were to contain traces of an ancient bloodline, Leylin had to find one that was the equivalent of a rank 3 Magus. Then, with the help of the A.I. Chip, the purification of the ancient bloodline would be achieved.

"Aaah, a rank 3 Magus!"

Leylin smiled wryly; he had only recently advanced to a rank 2 Magus and the spiritual force he received from his meditation technique were

extremely little. Most of the increase in spiritual force came from the Giant Kemoyin Serpent's bloodline.

Although there was nothing wrong with a Warlock relying on the strength of his bloodline, Leylin did not want his foundations to be unstable.

Furthermore, he had advanced to a rank 2 Magus by the age of 40. This speed was extremely astounding on the south coast. Even back in the ancient times, it was considered remarkable.

Hence, spending more time for a better foundation was something that he had to do.

As he was now, it was unlikely that he could win against a creature with strength equivalent to a rank 3 Magus, even with the help of his ancient bloodline. Those kinds of creatures were terrifying existences, to the point where most rank 3 Magi would not dare to face off against such creatures directly.

After a brief sigh, Leylin let go of the notion of collecting ancient bloodlines.

After all, the Giant Kemoyin Serpent's bloodline was enough for him right now.

Moreover, even if he lucked upon another ancient creature's bloodline, it would only be a very valuable research material for him. Once a Warlock has chosen an ancient bloodline, there isn't any way to change it.

"However, things do not seem to stop here!"

Leylin, who was observing Jenny through the crystal ball, frowned as if discovering something.

Under the control of his spiritual force, the images in the crystal ball began to change from Jenny's party to the top of a different hill.

At this moment, under the shroud of darkness, there were two black figures conversing on the hill.

"Can't you do your job properly? You actually let them get the Dragon-

Blooded Flower Bud?”

The man who spoke had a gruffy voice and his silhouette was extremely fuzzy. He even wore a mask to hide his features.

However, Leylin’s gaze pierced through the darkness and the mask to see the countenance of the man.

The face belonged to a sinister-looking old geezer that had a black skull branded on his forehead. It seemed to have been branded using a hot piece of metal. There were also writhing burn marks that filled the surroundings of the skull.

Moreover, there was an energy wave that was not weaker than James. He was a level 3 acolyte and apart from having no magic artifact, his strength was not below that of James.

“I... I did not want that to happen to...” The youth beside him shuddered, and even he started to stutter.

“The earlier Explosive Flaming Wolves were already extremely risky, if we were to strike again, they would most likely discover us. Moreover, the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon was extremely difficult to lure... Your subordinate, I, thought that the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon alone would be enough to stop those people...”

“Although the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon was still in its adolescent stages, the might it had far exceeded that of a level 3 acolyte, only an official Magus would be able to take it down!”

The old geezer acknowledged the young man’s deduction.

“So then, how did they manage to kill the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon?” The youth was puzzled. “Even if a Knight manages to breakthrough, he would at the very most be a Grand Knight, which wouldn’t be enough to change the outcome...”

“I can sense that the air was filled with extremely strong energy waves... It’s definitely a powerful existence aiding them secretly...”

The old geezer looked miserable. The strength revealed was only the

corner of an iceberg, yet it could make his hairs stand on end. It felt as if as he had returned back to his life as a helpless child. He had this premonition that if this force wanted to kill him, it would not have any trouble at all. As for the ability to be able to do that, the person behind this force must have reached the might of a rank 1 Magus!

"What should we do? Should we continue?"

The frightened youth went into shock. He knew the identity of this old geezer, but this was an existence that could make even the old man tremble in fear. That existence ought to be an even more powerful magician.

Once he thought of this, cold sweat began to drip down his body. He had an urge to turn around and run, never to participate in such a mission again.

However, very soon he mocked himself for this thought. Being a covert member of this large organisation, how can one leave that easily? Just from the information he held at his fingertips, he was already familiar with the nature of the big boss. If one wants to run or retire, the only way to do it was to lie in a grave.

"No matter what, we cannot allow that girl to bring the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud back to the eastern region! This is the command of the big boss!" The old geezer was extremely stern.

"Let's go..."

His cloak swiveled as he vanished into the darkness with the young man.

"Interesting! How very interesting!"

Leylin smiled wryly after seeing this scene. He had no interest in the petty struggles of these mortals but felt rather intrigued by the one pulling the strings from behind.

Power determines everything! In this subterranean world, for the Argus Family to be this powerful, there must definitely be an official Magus supporting it from behind the scenes!

Perhaps, this is an opportunity to interact with the Magi in the subterranean world!

Leylin rubbed his chin and entered into a deep thought.

.....

"Teacher! Teacher! I have returned!" Baelin dashed in quickly into the little shop with forge and anvils, smiling triumphantly. "I have also advanced into a Grand Knight and plucked the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud for Jenny!"

As for Leylin, he sat at the counter concentrating on brewing his tea filled with yellow fellow petals and green buds, all this while not lifting his head.

"After cultivating in the breathing technique I've taught you, you managed to advance into a Grand Knight only now? What a big idiot you are! Also, when have I ever accepted you as my disciple?"

Baelin's smile turned stiff.

"So... So when I slain that Goat-Horned Earth Dragon I heard your voice!"

The youth began to mutter to himself, "Back then you have admitted that I was your student, and even helped me to defeat...Argh!"

Pak! Leylin used a vine to lash at Baelin's head.

"This is your imagination, kiddo! Want to be my student? Cultivate for another ten thousand years first!"

Under the relentless verbal abuse, Baelin's head drooped.

He was extremely embarrassed now and had the urge to find a hole and hide in it. After slaying the Goat-Horned Earth Dragon, he knew that he had hallucinated, but he still wished to make use of this opportunity to make Leylin his master. These were also incited by Jenny and James.

Evidently, this shameless plan of his failed!

Leylin would never acknowledge him as his student, which left Baelin

standing there, not knowing what to say.

"Haha... Mister Leylin is really a strict teacher!"

At this moment, Jenny walked in and reduced the awkwardness for Baelin.

"I am just educating this silly little chap!" Leylin smiled humbly.

As for Baelin, he heaved a sigh of relief and stood at the side.

"Actually... For Baelin to be able to advance to a Grand Knight at his age, he is considered to have a remarkable talent! Even in the aspects of the more mysterious arts, I believe he will have exceptionally great talent..." Jenny deliberated, "Mister, why don't you give him a chance?"

Although Baelin did not quite understand what Jenny meant, he still looked gratefully at Jenny.

"I am rather strict when it comes to the selection of my students!" Leylin shook his head and expressed his rejection on the matter.

Hearing that, Baelin lowered his head again.

As for Jenny, she could only give a comforting gaze to him.

"Your purpose of coming here wouldn't only be to speak about this, would it?" Leylin sipped on his tea, with no intention to brewing a cup for Jenny as he asked.

"Actually, picking the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud was only made possible with the help of Mister Leylin. Also, regarding the Explosive Flaming Wolves, I have come here to express my heartfelt appreciation!"

Jenny curtsied and smiled wryly, "With your capabilities, Mister, I don't think I can offer you anything that you'll need. However, in the future should you require the assistance of the Argus Family, please send along your requests! I, Jenny Argus, solemnly swear by the name of the Sun Vines, that I will not refuse your bidding!"

Jenny's face turned solemn as she made an oath.

"Also, I have come here to bid farewell to you, Mister!"

“Wait!” Before Leylin could speak, Baelin opened his mouth in shocked,
“Jenny, you... you’re leaving?”

Chapter 304: The Resolution Of A Youth

"Yes!" Jenny nodded.

"The Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud will perish soon, and my father will not be able to hold on much longer with his illness!"

"Alright then! I wish you a safe journey back to your home!" Baelin smiled with reluctance.

"Thank you!" Jenny did not speak further.

"Alright! The eastern capital is where the Argus Family is, I will pay a visit in the future!" Leylin sipped on his tea and stretched his right hand, gesturing as a gentleman.

"If Mister can come, then it would be the happiest thing that happened to Jenny!"

Jenny smiled, "How about returning home with me? My father would definitely be excited to be your acquaintance!" She looked at Baelin, "Of course, big brother Baelin, can come too!"

Hearing this, Baelin grew nervous as he looked eagerly at Leylin.

"My apologies! I have no desires to travel right now!" Leylin declined without hesitation, once again making Baelin look down in dismay.

Hearing this, Jenny turned silent for a moment, before she curtsied and took her leave.

"What's wrong? If you have nothing else to do then get to work!"

Leylin roared at Baelin.

"Yes, Boss!" Baelin replied dispiritedly.

"Hehe... Youths!"

Leylin grinned silently.

This eastern region was one he would definitely pay a visit to. It was not only the centre of the mortals' government, but it was also a gathering place for the Magi. It was rumoured to have large scale magic bazaars too.

However, going there of his own choice and being invited were two entirely different concepts.

With Leylin's strength right now, he could do whatever he liked, but it would often attract some unwanted problems.

Furthermore, his injuries had not healed completely. Before finding enough methods to curb the emotional instabilities of Warlocks, he did not wish to have a high profile.

Hence, entering the area inhabited by Magi in the eastern region through the Argus family, was a wise choice.

Through the earlier spying done, Leylin had guessed that Jenny's road back home would not be smooth sailing. Evidently, Jenny had the same feeling, hence she invited Leylin to travel back with her.

Leylin understood that the most precious things were often unobtainable. Hence he would let Jenny encounter setbacks and beg him before he would help her, creating a false impression in front of her.

Moreover, there was an even better reason now!

Leylin glanced at Baelin who was nurturing his sorrow at the side before his lips curled up at one corner of his mouth.

A Magus who was fed up with the dangerous Magus world and was starting to live in seclusion under his apprentice's involvement with a girl, would once again enter the fray of the Magus world. Yes, it seemed like a pretty good excuse to return!

As for the age? Magi never bothered with appearances nor age.

As for Leylin, he could also use his bloodline to change his aura, eyes, body shape and appearances in minute proportions, allowing him to look much older than he was. This was enough to fool many Magi.

.....

Jenny journeyed with haste. Once she left the town after bidding Leylin farewell, she continued her journey hurriedly.

"Why? You wish to go after her?"

Looking at the horse carriage that was gradually turning smaller in the horizon, Baelin stood rooted to the spot. Leylin could not help himself but mock him.

Provoking this youth daily was part of Leylin's amusement outside of his cultivation and research.

"I'll definitely go to the eastern capital. Definitely, but not now!" A flame of hope seemed to start burning in Baelin's eyes.

"Boss! No, my lord! Please train me more rigorously! I want to be a man whose name will shake the eastern region, and then look for Jenny there with these achievements."

Baelin half-knelt on the ground, a great ambition, and thirst for power burning in his eyes!

"Haha, that's good! I like that look in your eyes! Don't worry, I'll give you an even more 'rigorous' training..." Leylin seemed to be harbouring some evil designs.

Originally, in such situations, perhaps a young man from a small town would train himself for many years and would then enter the eastern capital, and then take the Marquis' daughter as his wife. It would be just another common occurrence.

But it was unfortunate – or perhaps one could call it inspiring – that, contrary to Baelin's own expectations, he would soon be reunited with Jenny!

The night that Jenny left, Baelin, who had been tortured by Leylin for an entire day and was about to crawl into his pitiful bed and get some sleep, was woken up by the sound of a fierce banging on the door.

"Baelin! Lord Leylin!" This was a woman's voice, filled with fear, and it also belonged to the voice of someone Baelin would never forget.

"It's Jenny!" He quickly got up at lightning speed and opened the entrance to the shop.

Jenny was standing covered in blood, with James lying on the ground.

However, there was a large hole on this poor old man's chest, with some arrows on his back. By the looks of it, he would not be able to live past tonight.

"Baelin, get Lord Leylin! Save..."

Upon seeing Baelin, Jenny relaxed and immediately collapsed in a dead faint.

"Hey! Who's going to tell me what's going on here?" Seeing the soft female body in his arms, Baelin looked ready to break down.

Wait! Wasn't this how it usually went in tales involving Knights?

Where was the counterattack? Where was the wait? Where was the whole thing about meeting in the capital?

Baelin hugged Jenny tightly, his mind unable to work.

However, at this point, a warm blood gushed out and spilled into Baelin's hands, causing him to come back to himself.

"Lord Leylin, we have a problem!" The fearful, hoarse voice of the young man seemed to resound throughout Potter Town.

Blood and flames! The glinting from a knife, and then the dazzling rays from rank O spells!

This was the last thing James had seen.

Though he had long since known of the malicious ways of Jenny's two uncles, he had never imagined that they would be so gutsy as to ambush them right in the open, that too on the main street!

Under the sudden attack, Jenny's temporary guards could not even withstand a single blow.

If not for them relying on the Marquis' magic artifact that the Madam had secretly left behind for their use before they left, he and Jenny would not even be able to flee!

After that, they returned to Potter Town, escaping and fighting back on the way.

James had simply fainted after telling Jenny to obtain Sir Leylin's help.

"This is..."

James opened his eyes, bewildered as he stared at the yellow light and the ceiling that he did not recognise.

"Sir James, you're awake!" Baelin, who was at the side, quickly came over and tipped a bowl of green liquid into his mouth.

"Ugh..." Within the green liquid, there were numerous roots and suspicious things that looked like bugs floating on top. It looked extremely disgusting and the smell that seemed to come from a sewer assaulted his nostrils, almost causing this old man to black out.

"What's this?" After being forced to drink two large gulps, James finally got the chance to push away the large bowl in Baelin's hands.

He swore that even if he were to die, he would not want to smell this thing again.

"It's some herbal medicine that Lord Leylin instructed me to boil. It's very helpful towards your injuries!" Baelin pushed the bowl towards him, looking helpful.

"No, thank you so much for your help! Does this mean that I'm in Mister Leylin's shop? How is the young miss?"

James immediately asked.

"Don't worry, Jenny is very safe!" Baelin was a little confused, "Do you think you could tell me what happened?"

He was extremely curious towards the events that had befallen on them, but he felt sorry if he were to call Jenny awake, which was why he was still rather confused about the situation.

"What else could have happened?" James forced out a smile, and then gave a short summary of how Jenny's two uncles had arranged an ambush.

"That's vile!" Baelin felt aggrieved as he mumbled and then pounded on the table.

Pak! The sudden force that exploded caused the wooden table to be fall apart.

This loud sound also attracted the attention of another person.

"Sir Leylin, it's all thanks to you this time!" After seeing Leylin enter, James struggled to get up and bowed.

James himself knew how severely injured he was. After all, it was caused by another level 3 acolyte.

However, being able to treat such injuries, Leylin's identity had even become more mysterious.

"James, you are still sustaining injuries, so no need for such formalities!" Leylin smiled gently before tapping on Baelin's head.

"Let us step out and let James have some more rest..."

"Oh! Okay!" Baelin who seemed to be dreaming got up and as he stepped through the door, he comforted James. "Sir James, you should recuperate here quietly, we're safe here..."

"Of course! I have no doubts about that!"

James replied. How can a place that had an official Magus not be safe? If so, are there any safer places out there?

Apart from that, if Leylin wished to help them, Jenny and those two uncles of hers caught in the internal strife were only as significant as specks of dust.

"But what should we do to get Mister Leylin to help us?" James pondered.

Through some discreet inquiries made during this period, he had a little more understanding of Leylin.

Amongst the people that James knew, this Lord Leylin was aloof, proud and disliked troublesome matters, hence he seldom appeared in public places. The mortal items were just like floating clouds to him.

Apart from training Baelin each day, there was no other recreation that

Leylin would partake in.

"Baelin! Right, Baelin!" James clapped his hands, an indescribable light in his eyes...

.....

"Speak! What's the matter?"

Leylin looked at Baelin, who seemed to be struggling within during the journey to the training grounds, and smiled.

"My lord, I'd like to take your leave for a period of time and escort Miss Jenny to the eastern capital!"

Chapter 305: Hitchhike

The young man's voice was resolute; his fists were clenched and his face flushed. Faint rays of light radiated from his body.

"So stubborn. Are you sure you won't go back on your words? The moment you go to the eastern capital, I probably will no longer teach you!"

Leylin had a toying expression on his face.

"A Grand Knight isn't anything much. There are probably a whole dozen in Jenny's family. Let's not even talk about the dangers on the way that will probably cause you to lose your life. What are you planning to do after you send her back? Be a captain of some guards at the Argus Family? Or perhaps, even worse, become a mercenary?"

"Have you thought of all these?"

Leylin asked.

Baelin had turned pale, but his voice was steady, "I know all that! But... but if I don't send Jenny home safely, my heart will never be at ease. I know this for sure..."

"Fine! You can leave, but you are to never return."

Leylin looked at this toy of his that was full of righteousness and gave an ultimatum before returning to his room.

Boom!

The door slammed shut, leaving Baelin standing outside, silently.

"Thank you, Baelin!" At this moment, a small, cold hand covered Baelin's calloused palm.

"Jen..Jenny, you..." Baelin began to stutter as he spoke.

A finger that was equally icy – and was rather fragrant – was placed upon Baelin's lips.

"You don't need to say anything else!"

Jenny mumbled, and then rested her head on Baelin's shoulders.

“When I was younger, what I liked the most was leaning against my Father’s body and resting my head on his chest. Now, can you lend me your shoulders to rest on for a while?”

“Of-of course. It’ll be my pleasure to...” Baelin stood there in a daze, his nostrils breathing in the fragrance from Jenny’s hair. He did not dare move even a muscle.

.....

A night passed and Baelin looked at his crush who had left his side, and also the trace of dampness on his shoulders, before smiling wryly.

“Let us set off!”

On a mini horse-carriage carrying goods, Baelin wore rugged cloth and dressed as a horse keeper. As for Jenny and James, they were hiding inside a compartment of the horse carriage.

On the four sides of the horse carriage, large torches were lit, dispelling the darkness in the surroundings.

“Don’t worry! They won’t be able to discover you!” Baelin tried his best to console them.

As for Jenny and James, they could only look at each other and smile wryly.

As the Lord Marquis’s condition was worsening, Jenny and James only had a short respite to nurture their wounds before continuing on the journey.

Their employed adventurers and mercenaries were slain in the earlier journey, which made it obvious to everyone that someone was obstructing Jenny and her party. There were no more fools stepping forward to be their valiant protectors.

Furthermore, even the Baron who had lost a Knight and most of his elite troops felt a deep remorse. The way he looked at Jenny now was as if he was seeing the god of plague.

To him, the sooner Jenny – who was like a magnet for bad fortune – left,

the better it was. In any case, it would be best that none of the incidents were to happen in the area he oversaw, so that he can be acquitted of the blame.

This attitude was even more apparent after he received an anonymous letter from the eastern capital. It was to the extent of rejecting to grant Jenny an audience with him.

In this feudalistic area, it was like many small kingdoms which were independent. After seeing the Baron act this way, all of the Potter Town's citizens did not offer any help to Jenny thereafter.

For this small horse carriage, Baelin had to fork out three times of the market price to purchase it.

The seller even stressed that he would only sell to Baelin; he did not want to even have a buyer-seller relation with Jenny!

They simply had no confidence that Baelin could complete this simple purchase!

However, what else could they have done to ensure their safety?

Looking at the shops selling torches and the weaponry shop which were closed, Jenny and James were in dismay. As for Baelin, he looked even sadder.

However, he clenched his teeth and looked at Jenny sitting behind him, before cracking his whip.

Pa!

The horse carriage began to move, taking the three passengers out of this town.

“Wait a minute, can I hitch a ride?”

Just when the town behind Baelin gradually grew smaller and when his indecisiveness was at its peak, he heard a voice that sounded heavenly to the ears.

“Bo...Boss!”

Baelin rubbed his eyes and looked at Leylin wearing black robes with a small knapsack. Immediately, his eyes were filled with guilt and excitement, relief and many other expressions.

“Lord Leylin! We’re extremely grateful for you coming with us!”

At this moment, Jenny and James popped out from the narrow compartment of the horse carriage and smiled, as if relieved of a heavy burden.

From the looks of it, if this mysterious Mister Leylin was to join them, what more did they need to worry about?

It was evident that Jenny and James had joy on their faces no matter how hard they tried to conceal it.

Through Baelin, they have successfully made Leylin, this mysterious person who was most likely a Magus, come with them. Even after returning to the eastern region, involving Leylin in their scheme was extremely beneficial!

As for these petty schemes, Leylin had not even needed to guess before he knew their train of thoughts. However, he did not express it explicitly and allowed Baelin to escort him up the carriage.

With this powerful expert Leylin holding the fort, the other three felt much better in an instant.

They threw away all that was used to conceal themselves, and also changed the interior of the horse carriage to make it seem like it was carrying passengers instead of goods. They no longer had to squeeze into that small space throughout the journey.

Da Da Da!

The wheels of the horse carriage spun as the two old horses galloped with all their might to travel forth.

“Master Leylin, why are you willing to give up on your shop and come with me to the eastern capital?”

Baelin glanced at Leylin who was resting at a side, restraining himself as

much as he could before he asked.

“Of course it’s for you, you fool! How can I be reassured if I let you go alone?”

Leylin opened his eyes and spoke indifferently.

“Bo-boss, I’m so touched...” Baelin choked with emotion, sparkling tears gathering in his eyes.

“If you thought I’d say something like that, you’re gravely mistaken!” Immediately after, Leylin’s next words caused Baelin to be stunned.

“Business at Blazing Hammers is not doing well. I’ve been wanting to go to the eastern capital and find a suitable place to do some business or open a branch. Since you’re going, I’ll go too since you’re already going there.”

“No, you must be lying to me! You must be here because you’re worried about me, right Boss?”

Baelin looked ready to breakdown, while Jenny and James looked like they wanted to laugh, but did not dare do so.

“Just think whatever you want to think.”

Leylin stared, speechless, at this fellow who was a bit too egotistical.

He spoke indifferently and snuggled into his clothes, seemingly entering a deep sleep.

However, in his heart, he thought, “A.I. Chip, show me my current stats!”

[Beep! Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 21.1, Agility: 14.4, Vitality: 27.9, Spiritual force: 77 (104.3), Magic power: 77 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force) Status: Sea of consciousness is fragmented. Part of spiritual force is solidified.]

Over these two years, Leylin constantly used potions to heal his injuries. At this point, the injuries on his body had mostly recovered.

However, healing the damage done to his sea of consciousness and his spiritual force was a very slow process, causing Leylin to start feeling

impatient.

Hence, after his emotions due to his Warlock bloodline had erupted, he had decided to go to the eastern capital and find a way to increase the rate of this process.

After expelling the mark from the rank 3 Magus Alric, he could now release part of his spiritual force and return his strength to that of a peak rank 1 Magus.

Whether in the south coast or in Twilight Zone, Magi with this power could go on a rampage. As long as one did not meet with a Magus above rank 2, they were basically tyrants!

Though the Twilight Zone had a lot of high-grade meditation techniques, there were still some differences in the overall strength as compared to the south coast.

Leylin, who also trained in a high-grade meditation technique, was very clear about these differences.

The high-grade meditation techniques passed down from ancient Magi could help a Magus get stronger at every rank with all sorts of amazing powers along the way, but there were still a few obvious disadvantages!

After training up to a certain point, regular mortal resources were of no use to them, and only bizarre or even items from another world would be able to help one progress in one's meditation technique. If not, one would get stuck at some point.

In ancient times, Magi took over world after world and amassed vast amounts of resources. Also, the connection between Twilight Zone and the external world still existed, so this wasn't a problem. However, the troublesome matter was: Not only had Twilight Zone lost its supply of resources from other worlds, it had even lost contact with the subterranean world itself!

Certain high-grade meditation techniques were extremely harsh when it came to the materials needed, and they also could not be substituted!

Hence, though the percentage of Magi here was a lot higher than in the

south coast, there was probably the same number of rank 2 Magi on both sides.

As for rank 3 Magi, Leylin guessed they would be even lesser in number here than in the south coast!

After all, the higher the rank of a Magus, the rarer the materials they needed. This was even more so for Magi who used high-grade meditation techniques.

Without the help from these precious resources, Magi could only use time and make the occasional tiny amount of progress in these techniques. Such a speed would be enough to make a Magus have a nervous breakdown.

Most Magi used most of their lifetime and still could not break through the first level of their meditation technique, and were filled with unwillingness to accept their fate and were full of regrets at the time of their deaths!

Chapter 306: Stationed Troops

But Leylin's advanced meditation technique, Kemoyin's Pupil, also required specific resources. If it wasn't for the fact that he got his hands on the meat of the ancient Thousand Eyed Starfish by pure luck, then even Leylin had no clue how long it would have taken him to completely remodel his heart, and thereby become a rank 2 Magus.

Besides, compared to other advanced meditation techniques, the criteria for Warlocks were much harsher!

One mustn't forget – to train in Kemoyin's Pupil, one must first possess the ancient bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Snake!

Just this one prerequisite was enough to stump most acolytes!

Whether it was the south coast or Twilight Zone, there were very few beings with ancient bloodlines. They were practically extinct!

Any acolyte that wanted to obtain a bit of the essence from an ancient bloodline would find this task even more difficult than advancing to become an official Magus!

Take Kemoyin's Pupil for example. If one does not try to obtain the bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Snake or the Black Horrall Snake and instead settled for the next best thing, even getting blood from the matured Mankestre Snake, which had the strength of an official Magus, was an impossible task for level 3 acolytes!

High-grade meditation techniques had very harsh requirements, and they were not something that Magi from remote areas, such as the Twilight Zone, could fulfill.

Hence, though there were more ancient inheritances left behind here than in the south coast, the power on both sides was about the same, or perhaps the Twilight Zone's power was inferior to the south coast's.

"With the passage of time, everything is advancing!"

Having thought this through, Leylin couldn't help but sigh.

Though the south coast had not been able to gain the full inheritance, the Magi of the younger generations were just as talented and as good as the ancient Magi were at researching.

In a situation where they lacked specific resources, they had independently come up with another way for Magi to advance: using Grime Water and breaking through by way of stimulation through a rank 1 spell model.

Though this took a toll on a Magus' life force and even hindered their future, the price to rise to rank 1 and 2 was still affordable.

At least compared to high-grade meditation techniques which required precious materials, though there were many needs for resources using this simplified version, these could be satisfied using materials from the south coast itself. This had thus allowed for the prosperity of the south coast.

The top-grade materials were all gathered and collectively provided to Magi with high-grade meditation techniques, guaranteeing that they could develop their top-notch battle power and maintain their governance.

“Things are improving over time! Though the choice of the Magi in the south coast in using the simplified version was not the best choice, it was likely the most suitable for the land of the south coast.”

Leylin sighed.

Although the amount of ancient inheritances on the south coast were not incomparable with those in Twilight Zone, he had never seen so many Magi who were so fixated on the power of the ancient Magi. They would kill each other in order to receive even a part of a broken inheritance.

“But the Magi of the Twilight Zone have a lot of Magi training in high-grade meditation techniques, which proves that there must be even more resources from ancient times here than in the south coast. This might be a chance for me!”

Leylin brightened up.

For him, gathering high-grade meditation techniques, filling up his database, completing Sacred Flame, and simulating the content of the

fourth level of Kemoyin's Pupil were some of his goals. His other purpose was to gain precious materials from the subterranean world, as well as items that might be helpful in progressing in high-grade meditation techniques.

"Be careful now, the hills which we were ambushed previously are ahead!"

At this moment, James spoke and broke the silence.

Baelin immediately gripped his longsword. As for Leylin, he did not even budge an inch.

To him, an ambush from a level 3 acolyte was just a joke!

The horse carriage continued forward, and very soon, hills surrounded them on both sides. The large trees which grew to the skies projected sinister-looking shadows on the ground, which was also the perfect place for an ambush.

On the ground, there were large amounts of footprints and traces of blood; even the surrounding rocks and trees were covered with numerous arrows and scars made from sword slashes.

Although the ambush happened some time ago, even with people covering up the tracks, it was not too difficult to imagine the gruesome scene that had happened.

Upon seeing all of this, Jenny's body quivered and she immediately went back to the horse carriage.

As for James, he heaved a sigh, "Miss Jenny is but a fifteen-year-old girl. All of this is too grim and too early for her..."

"Since she was born and raised in a noble family, she has enjoyed the elegant lifestyle and glory of being a noble. However, she also must undertake the responsibilities of one, regardless of her age or gender. This is her calling..."

At this moment, Leylin who had been simulating the high-grade meditation technique Sacred Flame spoke with wisdom.

"Lord Leylin's words possess a philosophical element to them!"

James smiled and praised, but Leylin eyes lit up.

Just then, he had tried a different simulation of the Sacred Flame. After hearing James speak, he replied with his own feelings. However, when he did so, there was no doubt behind his words.

"Is this the power of Lady Fate? I seem to have glimpse part of her silhouette

Leylin grinned.

He already had some understanding that Sacred Flame was linked with the powers of destiny. The way to advance was also extremely bizarre. One had to absorb a mysterious item at the peak of where destinies clash before advancing.

As for fate, it revolved around the world.

It is no surprise then that in legends many heroes were always supported by one or two Magi who could read prophecies. It was all for mutual benefits.

Only by being with these 'main characters' who were destined for great things would the powerful strength of destinies converge.

Every time they were to make a huge decision, it was when the convergence of fate was at its peak. For Magi cultivating in this high-grade meditation technique, they first had to appreciate this great power and even be swept by it. To these 'children of destinies', the Magi had to attempt and adapt to change the outcome. During this progress, they often had to obtain mysterious, yet specific, items in order to advance and level-up their meditation technique.

"Fate and foretelling! What wondrous might!"

Leylin's gaze swept past Baelin, Jenny, and James. It seemed like, amongst these three, there was someone who would be able to change the entire history of the Twilight Zone!

However, as Leylin had merely simulated Sacred Flame and did not

actually train in this meditation technique, as well as it being incomplete, he could not tell who would be the person to change history.

Even so, Leylin knew for sure that the methods of the Botelli Family in using their ancestors' spirits by force was a very malicious practice!

"Sacred Flame! What a wondrous meditation technique!" Leylin could tell that even in ancient times, high-grade meditation techniques that could foretell the future were very, very rare.

However, he had no intentions of changing his meditation technique!

Not taking into consideration the incompleteness of the meditation technique itself, Jenna's strange demise was still vivid in his mind. He did not want to become the next Jenna. Besides, he did not trust this ability that could tell the future. In Leylin's eyes, the future constantly changed and could not be fathomed. Even if he could occasionally catch hold of a few scenes, it did not necessarily mean that he could control the future.

This was a difference in philosophy, and one where Magi had the most varied opinions!

For this reason, even if Leylin changed his meditation technique to train in Sacred Flame, he would definitely not be enlightened and might even cause significant damage to his sea of consciousness due to the technique itself.

However, Leylin was still drooling at the mouth within his heart about this ability.

Even though the prophecies might be false, under many circumstances they were important references and supplementary information sources.

"Perhaps after completing the Sacred Flame technique and propagating it, I can strip off some of the power from the people who have cultivated in it and create some item with magical properties."

Leylin suddenly came up with an idea, and the moment it was formed, it took root deep in his mind.

"Exactly! If I do this, while training, I can still see the situation and

obtain information firsthand and constantly perfect the technique. Even if I fail, I'll only lose some spiritual force and a bunch of resources, but I won't suffer much damage. If I succeed, I'll be the envy of even rank 3 Magi."

The carriage passed a hill with no troubles and then came to a field.

James and Baelin, who had been extremely nervous and on edge the entire time, heaved sighs of relief.

It was impossible for them to be ambushed on flat ground, which was why they could relax.

Lu lu!

Just as Leylin was pondering about his thoughts, the sounds of horses galloping from a far distance could be heard. A bright ray of light appeared on the horizon far away, and it quickly turned into a black cloud.

Many Knights wearing black leather armour on dark horses charged swiftly like a hurricane. They held onto the reins with their right hands and in their left hands they held onto blazing torches.

Very soon, many Knights surrounded the small horse carriage that Baelin's party was in.

"Garrison troops from the Lilan castle? Madmen! Crazy! They actually deployed troops to surround us..."

There was incomparable fear on James' face before it quickly turned into despair.

Magi were extremely powerful and could regard regular humans as ants. However, this scenario of surrounding regular people using troops was different.

To high level Magi, no matter how many regular humans there were, it was but one more death word for them. Just the radiation emitted from Magi's bodies would leave the regular humans to die in anguish.

However, James, who was an acolyte, did not have such terrifying strength.

He had once thought of a scenario: if he were faced with a hundred or less troops, he could deploy guerilla warfare and kill them all. However, if there were more, he would not be able to do that.

Chapter 307: Earthquake

A Magus' spiritual force and magic power were not infinite.

Even if they had extraordinary strength, they would still suffer from natural limitations.

Even if James was a level 3 acolyte, when faced with a troop of a hundred elite soldiers, he could only retreat.

The opponent's side had too many people, and even if they lined up for him to kill them, his pitiful amount of spiritual force and magic power would not be sufficient to kill them all.

And if these soldiers were all replaced with cavalymen?

Hopelessness had already started invading James' heart. Being surrounded by that many cavalryman, the most he could do was to escape by himself with that magic artifact of his, leaving behind Jenny.

But, we have Lord Leylin with us now. There shouldn't be any problem.

James glanced at Leylin and forced himself to calm down.

A situation where a squadron composed of magicians and civilian troops fighting each other has never before occurred in the history of Twilight Zone.

After all, no lord would stupidly provoke an official Magus.

Moreover, as far as Magi were concerned, they could use stealth and cast spells and could easily end the life of the perpetrator, so why should he unnecessarily waste his time?

If Lord Leylin really was an official Magus, then they need not be worried about this danger.

James inwardly comforted himself with these encouraging thoughts, and then he heard Baelin's nervous, almost-filled-with-fear voice asking, "Who are you all?"

Although he had advanced and become a Grand Knight, but it was evident that his attitude had not adjusted to this fact. After looking at the

expressionless and dense army, the small city resident's heart welled up with fear.

With the horses neighing in the background, a small path opened up among the ranks of the calvary. An old fellow wearing a black Chinese suit, and with the mark of a human skull on his forehead, walked out.

"Rhodes, it really is you! You went as far as to dare station some troops here, are you not worried about being punished?" The expression on James' face was an odd mixture of fury and regret.

"My beloved older brother, it is me!" Rhodes sneered.

"Older brother?" The stunned Baelin had only now discovered that if that sinister mark branded on Rhodes' face was removed, he would closely resemble James.

"We are all employed by the Argus Family. Thus, there is no need for the soldiers to face off against each other with swords." James tried one last compromise.

"Brother James! It's because I want to prove that I'm better than you! Even in the aspect of choosing my leader! It will definitely be the next head of the Argus Family!"

Rhodes' expression seemed to express a deep-rooted hatred.

"If it is about the matter that happened during our childhood years, I will apologize to you for that. I can even kneel before you. Nevertheless, Rhodes, one must not enter this vortex, as it can kill you..."

"Heehihihiheee... saying these things now, what's the use?"

Rhodes gave an eerie smile and came over.

"All of you... Annoying!" Leylin, who was in front of the carriage, frowned, expressing his dissatisfaction.

Just as he had thought over and improved his plan, it was suddenly disrupted by this Rhodes and soon, an evil fire approached Rhodes.

"Is this Lord Leylin?"

Rhodes gave a deep bow. In front of this person who had a high certainty of being an official Magus, he did not dare to be disrespectful.

“This is an internal affair of the Argus Family. Moreover, our family’s Lord Siegfried is also a respected Lord Magus. He also wishes he can meet you...”

“No! You lie! Grandpa Siegfried has been deceived by you.”

Leylin still did not respond. Jenny jumped up, in a straight sudden manner like the tail of a kitten when it was frightened or angry.

“The official Magus of the Argus Family is known as Siegfried, eh? It seems he is the common ancestor for both these troops...”

Leylin felt some pity for this Magus.

His own descendants, for the sake of gaining power, were beating up each other. Maybe all of this gives him a headache. Or maybe he doesn’t care about such things.

After all, a Magus’ lifespan was very long. By the time a few generations have passed by, whatever affection and such emotions that said Magus had towards his family would have become very diluted “I do not care who has Siegfried’s backing, but, I believe you are blocking my way. Now, step aside at once!”

Leylin frankly chided him. The one Rhodes mentioned was just a level 1 Magus, who certainly couldn’t induce fear in him, but he was extremely disgusted with Rhodes’ attitude.

“Hic.....” This kind of scolding, clearly made Rhodes feel deflated and he stood there looking foolishly around him. His face also turned red.

His every effort and achievements were like jokes in the eyes of his family.

This is unfair! Again I hear such a tone. And again I am being subjected to such an expression. And in my childhood, my older brother was also the same. Why is he stronger than me in everything? Why do all the good things happen to him and not me?

Rhodes's eyes turned redder.

Moreover, it isn't clear whether that Leylin is an official Magus or not. There exists a probability that he is just someone that slut Jenny hired to scare me.

Rhodes firmly waved his hand, "Charge!"

The multitude soldiers received the order and immediately charged forth.

Even if you are an official Magus, so what? Facing so many Knights, your spiritual force wouldn't last long. After this mission is done with, if worst comes to worst, I will just hide myself within the Argus Family and live comfortably. Anyways, with me under Lord Siegfried's protection, what can you do?

Rhodes eyed Leylin resolutely, his face turning the shade of an abnormally faint red.

"My lord! Jenny! You both please go ahead." Baelin then pulled out his long sword and his whole body swelled up like a balloon. He resembled a small giant as he blocked the carriage from harm.

After the enemy made their charge, he made his battle preparations and roused the secret Knight techniques that Leylin had instructed him in.

Also, the reason behind Rhodes's unusual facial change was immediately accurately revealed within Leylin's eyes.

"His pupils are unusually dilated. The blood flow in his brain has accelerated by 34%, a clear symptom of damage to his spirit."

Seeing the deranged-looking Rhodes, Leylin was somewhat clear on why the opponent was acting so unbridled.

The studies of Magi were extremely dangerous. Any forms of expression could very well sacrifice the Magus' life into it. Furthermore, once there was a slight mistake in important matters that concerned the consciousness, meditation, and spiritual force, many detrimental outcomes could be created.

This Rhodes, clearly received some harm to his sea of consciousness when he advanced to become a level 3 acolyte. He cannot completely control his spirit and his emotions, and so he appears rather nervous.

However, the reason why Rhodes went mad is only a small matter. Leylin only gave him a slight gaze before he focused his attention on the charging cavalry, his mouth displaying a slight sneer.

The charging troops had approximately 200 people. It seems as if the entirety of the Lilan Castle had come to battle. All of them had donned excellent quality armor and the pikes and huge battle axes they wielded carried a sharp, cold glint.

Two hundred mounts charged forth and the ground started to quake and under this mighty launch, Baelin only resembled a small, bemused ant.

This kind of battle formation would even cause a Magus to frown, but Leylin stood calmly as if nothing of importance was happening.

“Why do you all always use a common man’s way of thinking against a Magus?”

He lightly sighed and a faint khaki-colored light fell to the ground from his hands.

Hissssss! This light was as tiny as a firefly, and it looked as if a puff of breath blown on it would extinguish it.

After the khaki-colored light appeared on the ground, it promptly vanished from sight, as if it had fused into the soil and immediately ripples of tremors began to disperse out from the place where the light blended into the soil.

Bang! Boom! Boom! Bang! Bang!

The tremors began to extend in all directions as if several dominoes had been struck down, and the tremors gained and dispersed more and more power. Finally, there even occurred an earthquake.

Crrrrrrrrrackkk! The ground began to split open. The huge shockwaves made the Knights feel as if they were caught in the crossfire of bullets.

The surroundings quickly looked like as if there were waves from the sea surging forth causing continuous tremors.

“Argh!” “Earthquake!” “My horse” “Save me, my legs are broken!”

The rifts began to open from the Knight at the forefront before they soon covered the ground of where the whole cavalry was.

Along with the tremors, many horses stumbled and even threw their Knights atop them down.

The ear-splitting bone cracks, the neighing of the horses were all covered by the tremors that the earthquake caused. Only Baelin and James with a certain level of physical ability could barely make out the noise.

Rumble

The shock wave swept away all the soldiers and still continued on further till they dissipated.

As for the consumption of this spell, it was barely five spiritual force points.

Magi wielded intelligence! Not brute strength! What Leylin did earlier was to calculate the conditions of the surroundings, before using very little force to cause a devastating earthquake using the butterfly effect.

Just one strike! A crushing defeat! More than two hundred cavalymen were now dead. The wails of the injured and broken bits of limbs left Rhodes in utter shock.

“He...How can he be this powerful?”

Rhodes roared within his heart before he frantically turned away to escape.

“Baelin! Go capture him!” Leylin pointed at Rhodes. However, Baelin stood there stupefied, not moving an inch.

“Aren’t you going?” Leylin flicked his finger, only to have a translucent palm slap the back of Baelin’s head.

“Oh! Okay!” Only then did Baelin regain his senses, running towards the

direction Rhodes had escaped in.

“Mister Leylin! No, Lord Leylin! Pardon my presumptuous question... But what is your rank as an official Magus?”

Just then, James paid his respects to Leylin using the most revered formality, with Jenny following suit behind.

“Me?” Leylin grinned, “I’m just a rank 1 Magus who is shuffling his feet in front of the door of truth...”

“So you are indeed an official Magus! Please pardon our disrespect to you earlier!”

After hearing the words from Leylin’s own mouth, Jenny and James sighed in relief. They once again bowed to Leylin before an uncontrollable glee filled their eyes.

Chapter 308: Weeping Ghost Grounds

“My Lord! I’ve captured that old man!”

Along with Baelin’s voice, there was a low thud as if someone was being tossed to the ground.

“Alright. Let’s go see your little brother!”

Leylin laughed and left first, with James and Jenny trailing behind him.

Outside the carriage, Baelin was holding a large steel sword, his clothes tattered, thus revealing his firm muscles, and his skin also seemed to be glistening. He was staring at the old man in black clothing.

The old man still had the brand of a black skull on his face. This was naturally Rhodes, who had just escaped.

If one talked about strength, this level 3 acolyte wouldn’t be so easily taken down by Baelin, a Grand Knight. However, Leylin had first done something to Rhodes’ body, and Rhodes himself had lost confidence after seeing how terrifying Leylin was. This was how he had been able to be captured by Baelin and brought here.

“My lord, how should we deal with him?”

Baelin swung his large sword at Rhodes, an evil grin on his face.

However, knowing Baelin, he was simply intimidating Rhodes.

Seeing his brother who had chosen to embark on the wrong path, James’ expression was complicated, a few times he opened his mouth to say something but quickly shut up. After all, Leylin was the one in charge here. Besides, Rhodes had been caught by Leylin’s disciple, so he did not have the authority to deal with his brother.

“You-You can’t kill me!” Rhodes gasped, body seemingly tied up by an invisible rope. Blood rushed up to his face, leaving him flushed.

“Oh? And why is that?” Leylin asked with a smile.

“I-I’m part of the Argus family! If you kill me, Master Siegfried won’t let you off,” Rhodes answered while struggling.

“Dream on!” Before he even finished speaking, he was interrupted by Jenny.

The young girl’s face was filled with contempt, “You’re just the conferred title of a subject in the family. Even if you’re a level 3 acolyte, who do you think Master Siegfried would choose to listen to, an official Magus or an acolyte?”

These words were like a sharp arrow, directly piercing into Rhodes’ heart and causing him to turn pale.

As long as these conferred subjects did not possess any land, to put things nicely, they could be said to be subjects of the family. In reality, they were high-grade servants of the Argus Family, and this was also Rhodes’ position.

In addition, even Siegfried would not offend a Magus of the same ranking over an acolyte.

“I’m afraid in Grandpa Siegfried’s heart even if my uncles or even father were to offend a lord Magus, he would send them over to the Magus as an apology!”

The girl looked at Rhodes who seemed to have lost his spine and had no intentions of taking revenge, and instead took pity on him.

Siegfried was a very distant relative of theirs. His family tree had probably branched away seven to eight generations ago.

Whether it was Jenny’s father, her uncles, or anybody in the family who would take control of the Argus Family, it didn’t matter who it was as long as they had the blood of the Argus Family!

Losing one of the families, who was a hindrance, would not really be a large issue for Siegfried.

“Only after gaining enough strength is it possible for Magi to make connections with each other!”

Jenny clenched her fists tightly, her desire for power intensifying.

“One day, I will advance to become an official Magus!”

In that moment, Baelin seemed to see boundless starlight shining from Jenny's eyes.

"How about him? What should we do?" Baelin scratched his head. Seeing James who seemed to want to say something, he was getting a headache.

"Let him go!" Leylin suddenly exclaimed.

"My lord!" James was evidently pleasantly surprised and half-knelt, "I thank my lord for his benevolence on behalf of my useless brother!"

It was obvious that he still thought highly of his biological younger brother. However, the one calling the shots here was Leylin. Without fully understanding Leylin's intentions, he did not dare say a word for fear it would cause Miss Jenny trouble.

Now that Leylin was letting Rhodes go, gratefulness could be seen in his eyes.

"Since Lord Leylin has spoken, I have no objections," Jenny spoke up, though James smiled wryly in his heart.

This tone meant she was furious with him. However, for his brother, he persevered.

Xiu Xiu!

An invisible rope was pulled on by Leylin, and Rhodes was made to stand up.

"Leave. Don't let me see you again!"

Baelin pushed Rhodes and pretended to be threatening him by gesturing with his sword.

Rhodes totally ignored Baelin's threats and glanced at his brother James, a complication expression on his face, and quickly left.

All this time, he did not dare to take a glance in Leylin's direction.

Leylin laughed. This was just a level 3 acolyte who was basically like an ant in his eyes. It didn't matter to him whether Rhodes was killed or

released.

However, since this could earn him a good impression, why not?

He believed that he needed to return to the side of people who abide the law and were kind. Even if he didn't feel this way at all in his heart, it was necessary to display that image on the outside.

When associating with a Magus who was a stranger to them, a good reputation would lower many people's guards.

For instance, right now, James and Jenny's eyes no longer showed the prudence and cautiousness they originally had. Now, there was more admiration and respect towards him.

.....

Rhodes was extremely intelligent. After knowing Leylin's status as an official Magus, he wisely chose not to bother them with their journey any longer.

Just like this, the undisturbed journey went past many towns, allowing Leylin and Baelin to learn more about this place.

Twilight Zone was not a peaceful area, and places, where the sun stone and light were not able to reach, were filled with many darkness type creatures. Moreover, apart from humans, there were many other intelligent species which inhabited such areas.

Along the way, Leylin met several handsome looking mice-men the size of human kids that rode large spiders as their steeds. They seemed to be a type of elf. According to Jenny, these were dark elves that even had a kingdom in the areas where light did not reach. The might of their species was about the same as humans.

Of course, the creatures which were the greatest threat to Leylin and their party were those lurking in the shadows.

Without flames or the sun stone to dispel the darkness, these creatures would swarm forward like mosquitoes, devouring unaware travellers to bits.

Hence, to travel in Twilight Zone, apart from having enough fire starter items or sunstones, power was a necessity. Otherwise, the only outcome was having regrets after becoming feces in the desolate field.

Of course, all of these proved no threat in front of Leylin, an official Magus.

Even if it was a horde of the most brutal creatures, they were just cute little pets in front of him, which could be broken apart easily.

Reverence filled Jenny and James' eyes as they looked at Leylin, who had closed his eyes for meditation.

Leylin had lent a hand several times along the journey. But just this power was the corner of the iceberg that Leylin possessed, it was enough to leave Jenny and James in utter shock and reverence.

All those times when he struck had might exceed the guardian of the Argus Family—Siegfried!

However, just at this moment, the horse carriage which had been moving stopped.

“Lord Leylin! Jenny and Sir James! In front of us is the Weeping Ghost Grounds, should we make a detour?”

Baelin opened the door and in one of his hand, he held a broken piece of the map.

On the map, the area that they were about to reach was the Weeping Ghost Grounds. It was circled in red, with several splatters of red ink that made it seem like spilled blood.

“We’re going to the eastern capital, and the fastest way is through the Weeping Ghost Grounds! This will save us a good half of the total time. If we’re making a detour, we must head north to the Geri Basin, and then through the Sicily Valley. This will cost us a lot of time...”

James explained to Leylin.

“So then, what special dangers are there in the Weeping Ghost Grounds?” Leylin asked as his interest was piqued.

From James speech, it seemed like he had also approved of this route. Of course, all this was only possible if Leylin was with them.

“The Weeping Ghost Grounds is a very famous forbidden area in the whole of the Twilight Zone. It is said that two powerful Magi had a battle here, hence causing many mysterious types of phenomenon and power lurking within, which are still present up till now...”

James was extremely solemn. “History has it that the Weeping Ghost Grounds has gobbled up many adventurers who doubted the myth. Mercenaries, Knights, acolytes and once even an army of ten thousand!”

“According to myths, one official Magus had once managed to pass through the Weeping Ghost Grounds. According to his description, there seemed to be many spirit bodies within the area. These spirit bodies were filled with malicious intents. Once someone were to enter the area, they would be relentlessly chased after.

Spirit bodies huh? That really brings back memories!

Leylin grinned. He had dived deeper into his research of spirit bodies. There were not many Magi who were more competent than him in this field. It could be said that the least of his fears was a spirit body.

Furthermore, since a Magus had already successfully passed through this area, then it would most likely not be very dangerous.

“We’ll head through the Weeping Ghost Grounds then! I wish to see the traces of previous generation Magi!”

Leylin laughed as he spoke.

As for James and Jenny, glee was written all over their faces.

Chapter 309: Lost

The Argus Family's Marquis illness demanded immediate attention, and time was running short. If they were unable to send the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud back to the Marquis on time, he would very likely be poisoned to death.

By then, Jenny's two uncles would have most likely seized control of the internal powers within the Argus Family.

This was a scene that Jenny was not willing to witness.

However, to let her and James pass through the Weeping Ghost Grounds? That would only be courting death!

Hence, after hearing that Leylin agreed to it, Jenny and James were exhilarated.

"Oh, I got this! So, we'll pass through the Weeping Ghost Grounds, right? This name is really distasteful!" Baelin spoke casually and returned to the driver's seat, before cracking his whip.

As a local, the only knowledge he knew of his world was Potter Town and the nearby Woody Wastelands. Due to the limited traffic and deficiency of information that Potter Town received, he had no knowledge of other places.

In fact, this was his first time travelling!

Along with the horse neighing and the creaking made from the spokes of the wheels of the horse carriage, they gradually entered the area of the Weeping Ghost Grounds.

As the Weeping Ghost Grounds was labelled a forbidden area, very few travellers dared to tread through it. The roads had long since been abandoned, with many weeds and shrubs growing on the sides. Baelin could barely recognise the tracks that were once used as they travelled on uneven ground.

As the horse carriage went deeper into the Weeping Ghost Grounds, a layer of thin mist veiled the area, slowly engulfing their surroundings.

At first the mist was rather mild, but as it got denser, their vision was reduced to only a distance of five metres from the horse carriage.

“Lor... Lord Leylin! The mist is too dense now...” Baelin slowed the pace of the horse carriage. To be going quickly under such poor conditions was simply seeking death.

“I got this!”

Leylin waved his right arm, and a thread of grey mist swirled in his palm. It was dispersed in one moment yet they converged immediately after.

“There’s a bit of chilliness in this aura. Also, it’s not purely made from water vapours...”

He then ordered, “A.I. Chip, analyse components!”

[Beep! Mission establishing, gathering source material, analysis beginning...] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

Very soon, a composition image appeared in front of Leylin’s eyes.

[The main component of this mist is water at 98.2%. There are also mixed amounts of salt, protein and other digestive enzymes...] [Through comparison with the database, it is determined to be the tears of a human! Accuracy: 99.99%]

The A.I. Chip’s reply shocked Leylin a bit. After a moment had passed, the corners of his lips curled upwards.

“Using tears as mist? Interesting! I have even caught a whiff of some spirit bodies in this...”

“Lord Leylin, is there anything wrong?”

Jenny and James looked at Leylin, their eyes filled with worry. During the A.I. Chip’s analysis, outsiders could only perceive Leylin staring blankly for a second before grinning to himself.

Weeping Ghost Grounds was a forbidden area established atop countless skeletons. If not for this official Magus, Leylin, standing guard this time, Jenny and James would not have dared to approach this area.

Furthermore, even with Leylin around, Jenny and James were still wary after entering the Weeping Ghost Grounds and did not let their guard down for a single moment.

“Lord Leylin! The mist is too much; I’ve lost my way...”

At this moment, Baelin stopped the horse carriage and turned back with an apologetic expression.

“This... How can this happen?” Jenny and James looked at each other before stepping out of the horse carriage. Very soon, they were stupefied by the amount of mist there was.

In front of the horse carriage were three forked paths, they seemed to be like branches of an ancient tree, winding and crooked, heading towards different directions.

There stood a badly damaged, rotten wooden signpost with countless vines creeping on it.

On the sign, the black words which had almost faded away were the names of the different paths and even had arrowheads pointing to their locations.

“Hut of the Weeping Woman, Paradise of Wailing Creatures, Jones’ Pastry Shop...What strange names are these?” Jenny was bewildered. “I haven’t been here before, but according to the map there should only be one path, nothing like forked paths of any sort...”

“It seems like we’ve met with some trouble!” James sighed exasperatedly, but deep down he felt a little more relieved.

Previously, he did not know what terrors were hidden inside the Weeping Ghost Grounds, which made him be on guard all the time. However, now that trouble had presented itself, he felt a little better.

At the very least, now that some troubles had appeared, their party had to solve them.

“Hng! Petty tricks!”

At this moment, Leylin walked out too. As he saw the sign, his

expression showed distaste.

Very soon, a layer of red light flashed past Leylin's pupils, and the surroundings underwent a tremendous change.

The grey mist immediately thinned, revealing many bizarrely shaped trees. As for the signpost, many tiny three-headed snakes and toads now covered the words which were previously there.

"These are only the effects of poltergeists, affecting the mental soundness of regular humans and even acolytes. If it's only up to this extent, it would be such a disappointment."

"Now I will lead the way, and you will just follow my movements." Leylin let Jenny and James sit in the horse carriage as he took up the role of assistant driver.

"Yes, my Lord!"

After Leylin sat beside him, Baelin inhaled a deep breath, feeling much more relieved than before, "Which way do we go?"

"None of those paths, head to the extreme right!"

Leylin sneered at the originally pitched forks. At this moment, in Leylin's vision, the three paths had all disappeared, turning into three huge caves that were covered by trees.

If the horse carriage entered those areas, they would definitely meet with a dead end. Once they had deviated from the main path, they would be trapped in there.

"But, those are granite rocks! How are we going to travel through that?" Baelin scratched his head.

The direction that Leylin had pointed in was where a large granite rock sturdily stood, with algae growing on it.

Pak! Before Baelin could finish talking, he was smacked on the head by Leylin, "Just go where I tell you to, why do you have so much rubbish to say?"

Baelin wailed, but his experiences and training with Leylin allowed him

to quickly follow the instructions given.

The horse carriage moved forward, charging towards the ten meter tall granite rock.

“Hey Hey! There’re only five more metres, should we stop now?”

Baelin questioned Leylin as he rode forward. However, as no reply was given, he had no choice but to grit his teeth and urge the horses forward.

“Three metres! One metre now!” Baelin cried in alarm but at the very end he gave up and shut his eyes.

Pop!

As the head of the horses crashed into the granite rock, the expected impact and cries did not happen.

Baelin widened his eyes in shocked, and very soon a strange sight occurred!

The heads of the two horses had already extended into the huge granite rock. Looking at this scene, it seemed like the huge rock had swallowed them.

The huge rock continuously engulfed the horses from their head to their necks, to their back and tails, and finally towards Baelin.

“Yikes!” Baelin unconsciously extended his right hand to block the impact, but very soon a flash appeared in his vision.

Pop! A feeling like walking past a wall of water came onto him, as Baelin looked at the surroundings in awe.

After passing through the granite rock, the mist thinned by a considerable amount. With the torches carried by the horses and the frightening physical abilities as a Grand Knight, Baelin’s vision had already extended to over a dozen metres.

On both sides of the road were black birch trees, growing in an orderly fashion. In the middle was a small path, which was where the horse carriage was travelling on. As for the original three forked pitches, they had completely vanished by now.

“Did we stumble upon some strange illusory spell earlier?” As a level 3 acolyte, James was the quickest to understand what had happened.

However, Leylin did not answer his question. On the contrary, he turned even more solemn, much more than when he looked at the pitched forks.

“The direction is wrong! This isn’t the scene that I saw earlier!”

In his earlier observation, the correct path that Leylin saw should have been a small road laid with brambles, but not such a neat and orderly looking road like this.

“Don’t tell me that I have also been influenced by the illusion earlier?” Leylin’s face turned dark.

However, the astonishment deep within his heart far surpassed what his face revealed. He was already a rank 2 Warlock! Although he was injured, a simple spirit body could no longer affect his senses.

“A.I. Chip! Scan the surroundings!”

Leylin rubbed his temples and ordered as a flash of blue light glowed in his eyes.

[Beep! Mission establishing, beginning scan!] [Alert! Alert! Due to unknown interference, the scan is unable to be accomplished. Will try again in 1 second...Bzzt..Bzzt...]

The A.I. Chip responded. However, very soon the feedback received was like a broken tape mixed with a radio with no signals, giving off a buzzy feedback noise.

This piercing noise grew louder and louder, finally turning into the ear-piercing wail of a woman.

“Wuu...Wuu...”

This noise filled Leylin’s head, making him dizzy.

“Have you guys heard anything? I think I hear a woman crying!”

In reality, Baelin muttered. He soon received the responses of Jenny and James, “Us too!”

“Over there!” James suddenly pointed.

Leylin also looked in the direction James had indicated, and under a rotten birch tree, a woman wearing a long black dress was crouching and weeping.

“This voice! This voice! It’s Marsha’s! I won’t ever forget it!”

An incredulous look was on James’ face. He quickly hopped off the horse carriage and rushed to the woman.

Chapter 310: Dreamland's Creature

“Marsha! My beloved Marsha, is that you?”

Agitation filled James' voice as he skipped lightly towards the woman in the black dress, reaching out his hands to pull her shoulders back.

Leylin stood on the horse carriage while observing, yet he did not stop James.

The situation right now was extremely strange, and he needed a guinea pig to test the waters.

James used some force to turn the woman in black dress around.

Suddenly, all he saw was a face with no orifices, but only a black swirl on it.

Xiu! Horror filled James' face as he seemed to be pulled into a long black string and was continuously swirled as he was absorbed into the woman's face.

The whole process was extremely quick, ending just as Leylin was about to lend a hand. However, through a replay, he could clearly see how James was stretched and distorted bit by bit into more than a dozen metres and eventually absorbed into the woman's swirling face.

This time disorder left Leylin feeling so disgusted that he wanted to puke.

At the same time, his heart sank.

“This is definitely not any sort of spirit body, but a more terrifying existence that I am still unable to comprehend...”

In an instant, Leylin recalled from the A.I. Chip's database that back in ancient times, battles between two high ranking Magi would often devastate the earth and seas around them. At the same time, they could separate the dimensions of space and time, causing others to perceive things incorrectly.

Especially in such places, there would often be strange beings with

terrifying powers.

Some of these existences were extremely weak, such that even a level 3 acolyte could easily eradicate them. However, some others were so terrifying that they could even surpass the powers of the Morning Star Magi, directly causing the stars in the sky to fall!

“This black clothed woman is but an apparition. Once certain conditions are fulfilled, the swirl on her face activates, swallowing any objects that come close to it...”

Leylin made his conclusion in an instant. “Right now, my power is still lacking. Against such an apparition, which obviously isn’t weak, choosing to engage without any further information is simply a foolish act. Run!”

His body instantly turned into black mist and vanished into the thin air.

With the flicker of black light, Leylin’s body appeared several hundred meters away with a black arc that followed behind.

“Wuuuuu!”

However, the ear-piercing screams still sounded in Leylin’s ears, the pitch of which was even higher than before.

Leylin was stupefied as he found himself changing directions and flying towards the woman in the black dress.

Ka-cha!

The woman stood up and her skull split open into two halves. From that gaping hole, rows of razor sharp fangs were revealed, as though her face had turned into the jaws of a creature.

Bang! The giant jaw snapped shut, and darkness enveloped Leylin.

.....

Leylin felt as if he had fallen from an extremely high place and hit the ground before his body shuddered as he regained consciousness.

“I seem to have been swallowed by that woman earlier!”

“Where is this?”

Leylin rubbed his head as he looked at his surroundings.

The room was dark and small, with many spiderwebs at the corners. There was not a single piece of furniture, nor even windows or a door.

It seemed to be a small, sealed basement of the sorts.

Besides Leylin, there also lay Baelin and Jenny. Their eyes were shut tight as they were unconscious. It seemed like they would need a long while before regaining consciousness.

“An even deeper illusion!” Leylin was extremely solemn.

“If the three pitched forks of the road were the superficial layer of this illusion, the women in the black dress was the second layer, and this, the third!”

An illusion! Also, Leylin did not have much interaction with the dreamland, but in ancient times, the Magi had once conquered another large world, in which the inhabitants had wielded dream and illusory powers. Through the powers of the dream realm, they could easily accomplish anything, and were even revered as gods by the ignorant inhabitants of the other planes and dimensions!

Also, through a short paragraph recorded in antique books, Leylin knew that the further one threaded into an illusion, the more difficult it was to escape.

“I’ve got to get out! The third level of an illusion is dangerous enough!”

Black flames ignited in Leylin’s palm, “Latent Fireball!”

The black fireball struck a corner of the basement, creating a deep hole.

“First I must understand the constructs of this illusion!” Leylin rubbed his chin. He had no better solution against such a power, so he could only test things out before searching for other methods.

.....

Leylin jumped into the dark hole he created.

“It’s the 193rd time, yet I’m back at this place!” Leylin looked at Jenny

and Baelin who were still unconscious, his expression looking extremely severe.

“Through my experiments, I have already understood the three-dimensional constructs in here. As expected, the deeper the level of illusion, the less sturdy the dimensions within are, which will finally turn into chaos...”

If the dimensions here were to collapse, there were only two possibilities. Either one would enter a deeper levelled illusion, or if their spirit was unable to bear the brunt of it, they would directly be swallowed by the caster of this illusion.

“I’ve tried all other places, so I am only left with this now!”

Leylin kicked the unconscious bodies of Baelin and Jenny away, revealing the dusty grey floor beneath them.

With a fireball, the ground was shattered...

Pop! The floor of the basement cracked opened, and Leylin jumped into it.

“It’s still the same basement as before, but Jenny and Baelin have already disappeared. Good! Very good! There is finally some change...”

Leylin’s eyes swept over the surroundings. It was still the same cramped basement. However, what was different than before was that Jenny and Baelin’s bodies were no longer here.

“Signs of repair that cannot keep up with the damage done huh? Next, I’ll have to...” As if plucking the strings of a zither, both of Leylin’s hands streaked across the void, creating circles of ripples.

Under the movements of his fingers, the texture of the underground basement resembled water with light ripples.

The greater the area the ripples covered, the more the void contorted, until finally, a pop sound was heard!

The space of the underground basement shattered, and Leylin’s body dropped downwards once again.

.....

Mirrors! Bright mirrors were everywhere, reflecting the appearance of a black haired, noble youth.

“This should be the interval between the two levels of the illusion!”

Leylin touched the ice-cold mirror and made a deduction.

Right now, he had momentarily escaped from the illusion. This would definitely draw the attention of the caster.

However, this was the effect he desired!

“Wuu..Wuu...!”

At this moment, the weeping voice of an adorable girl traveled over.

Leylin abruptly turned his head, and in one corner of a mirror, he saw a little purple haired girl wearing a red dress with white socks who was crying.

“Wuuuu... Alice has lost her little bear! Big Brother, can you accompany me to search for it?”

The little girl stopped her crying and looked at Leylin with imploring eyes.

“My apologies, but I cannot!” Leylin shook his head.

“But why?” The little girl was puzzled. “Alice is extremely obedient! Don’t you like Alice?”

As she spoke, more mirror images appeared in the surroundings.

“I want to, but let us speak first!” Leylin tried his best to speak calmly.

He did not have much experience dealing with such strange entities. Furthermore, the other party was a higher dimensional creature. Their trains of thought and level of thinking would be different than humans. Leylin himself did not know if he could convince it to let him go.

“Won’t you accompany Alice to find her little bear?”

“No!” Leylin shook his head his head resolutely. It was rumoured in

legends that similar things had happened before. Once one agreed to such a request, it would be treated as them having signed some sort of bizarre contract, and they would fall under the manipulation of others. Some were even indefinitely sucked into other dimensions.

Although there were a few lucky ones who had obtained mysterious strength through such encounters, Leylin was never one who relied on gambling, especially when his life would be at stake!

Crash!

Just as Leylin rejected her, countless beetles poured from the mirrors and engulfed him like a tide.

“I’ll still have to attack!” Leylin’s brows furrowed. He knew that he had to demonstrate his strength before the other party would acknowledge him.

“Latent Fireball! Eyes of Petrification!”

In an instant, his whole body was covered in scales, and black flames continuously billowed from his hands. Even his eyes had a mysterious light that shot outwards.

Pak! Pak!

Many of the black beetles were petrified as they fell to the ground, turning into a pile of dust. As for most of them, they were burnt into nothingness by the black flames.

However, the beetles still poured out continuously from the mirrors, and what Leylin had managed to get rid of was but one hair from nine oxen.

“The strength of my opponent has far exceeded my imagination!”

Leylin smiled wryly as he tossed a red powder out, “Scorching Touch!”

Two scorching rays of light were released, clearing the path in two directions.

However, Leylin’s face turned pale immediately, and his consciousness wavered. The crystallised spiritual force had even more cracks opened, almost shattered.

Scorching Touch was a rank 2 spell, and right now Leylin only had a portion of his spiritual force solidified. With the strength of a rank 1 Magus, he would naturally receive backlash from recklessly using a rank 2 spell.

This backlash was considered relatively light. If he were to use the innate talent of a rank 2 Magus, it was very likely that his sea of consciousness would undergo drastic changes.

“Chi Chi!”

The sea of beetles cried incessantly, once again pouring towards Leylin.

Leylin, whose spiritual force was already depleted, could only watch as layer after layer of beetles engulfed his body.

Chapter 311: Eastern Region's Capital City

The black beetles completely covered Leylin's body; it was as if he was wearing a very thick, black coat.

Numerous beetles tried to gnaw on Leylin's body; their teeth struck upon his black scales, resulting in crinkling noises.

Leylin's body emitted a black light and the layer of beetles trembled and fell off, but right after they just extended their exoskeletons and crawled back up.

These beetles eventually even advanced to the only exposed part of Leylin's body: his eyes! They wanted to completely submerge him in the sea of their bodies!

"I underestimated them," Leylin muttered. He had not expected that these black beetles would be so troublesome. There was not enough time for him to execute Toxic Bile!

"Ah! How can I die in this place?"

Leylin roared, and at this exact moment, the Giant Kemoyin Serpent's bloodline within his body began to violently circulate.

Soon, Leylin's pupils became amber colored vertical slits, and while facing the sky, he let out a loud hiss!.

"Hisssss!"

It sounded fierce, and appeared very sinister! A tremendous, devilish aura was cleanly emitted from Leylin's body; it was as if a predator from ancient times had been resurrected.

Black energy spewed out of his body and congealed behind his back, taking the form of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent, which hissed into the sky.

Rumble! rumble!

Along with this huge shockwave, the beetles, which had forcefully crawled all over Leylin, turned to dust in midair, as if they had all been struck by bullets.

Leylin's roars still echoed, and the power and emotions in his blood vessels recklessly surged.

Ka cha! Snap!

The surface of the surrounding mirrors covered with cracks and then exploded with a loud bang, exposing an opening of hollow space.

"Fu...Fu...", Leylin stopped his roaring and started panting heavily.

Just now, at the critical moment, the blood essence of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent within his body had exploded, which had also placed a very strong burden on his body.

Currently, Leylin was surrounded by pitch-black nothingness. Spread about on the ground were the butchered limbs of the black beetles.

Hoo! Hoo!

The mutilated corpses of the black beetles hovered in midair and formed the black face of a woman, which said, "A Warlock with the bloodline of the ancient Giant Kemoyin Serpent? I also get a whiff of the nauseous odor of spirits from your body."

Her lips squirmed as she spoke in the ancient Byron language.

It seems like it only likes the pure spirits of humans. As for the bodies of Warlocks, not only do they have a distinct bloodline, their spirits are different from normal spirits as well. Hence it doesn't like this scent!

Although he put on a calm expression, Leylin was inwardly excited. Using the ancient Byron language, he said, "I accidentally intruded upon your territory. I request that you let me leave; I will also pay a ransom for it..."

This existence wasn't human, so Leylin bluntly stated his conditions.

"Not bad! However, I do not like the spirit of a Warlock." The huge human face responded, "As for the price for redeeming your spirit and those of the other two civilians, I ask that you give me those green spirit crystals in your pouch."

"The green spirit crystals?" Leylin was startled. Immediately, upon his

hand, were some beautiful crystals that emitted a green radiance and luster like that of a green diamond.

“Yes, precisely!” The huge human face spoke.

Those are the ancient, pure spirit crystals that I got by killing the Loathsome Evil in the Ancient Spirit Slaying Sect’s secret realm. There are rumors that these crystals are valued equally highly by all existences in the different worlds... A flash of understanding went through Leylin’s mind.

“So that will be the ransom for releasing me and the other two!” Leylin nodded, expressing his agreement. Then he asked, “What happened to that old man in the beginning?”

“He is deeply immersed in the illusion; he has already lost himself within my body....”

The huge human face replied.

Leylin had already guessed that to be so. He sighed, “Send me out!”

.....

Hu...”

Leylin opened his eyes and found himself lying on one side within the carriage. Baelin and Jenny were on the other side, and James’ body had silently vanished.

In the same way, the soul crystals also disappeared from Leylin’s hands.

“Here it is, the original location of the three-forked paths...”

By now, the grey mist had settled down for the most part. The three forked paths and the huge granite rock had all faded, and in their place was the original road.

Leylin could clearly recognize the direction, and he quickly drove the horse carriage and left this place.

“This time, it was really dangerous!”

While Leylin kept driving, some traces of fear still lingered. If not for the

enemy having disliked the idea of having her spirit contaminated by Leylin's bloodline, or perhaps even having feared the power of Leylin's bloodline, Leylin would have also ended up like James, being forever trapped in the body of that huge face made of beetles.

The further he went, the more the mist began to clear up, until eventually, it completely vanished, exposing the view of overgrown fields on both sides of the road up ahead.

"The Weeping Ghost Grounds are truly a dangerous place!"

The traumatic experience that Leylin had just gone through caused him to keep turning around and check behind his back as he continued to drive, up until he completely lost sight of the Weeping Ghost Grounds.

Behind him, the fading gray mist congealed again to form a wall that blocked his view.

I also wonder about the two Magi who had once fought there—what rank were they, and what was the result of their battle? Leylin thought, and then he sighed.

Just the aftermath of a fight had disturbed time and space and had created such a strange place. Leylin knew from this that these Magi's powers exceeded his own imagination. They were probably existences that surpassed Morning Star Magi!

"There will inevitably be a day when I, too, will reach such a level!"

This time's incidents only reinforced Leylin's resolution to become stronger.

"Oh! Where am I?"

After leaving the Weeping Ghost Grounds, Baelin woke up, holding his head with his hands.

"How do you feel? Do you remember anything from before you lost consciousness?" Without turning around, Leylin asked while he brandished his horsewhip.

"My memories are not very clear. I think that we encountered a woman

as we passed through the gray mist.” Baelin looked as perplexed as he sounded.

Very soon, the horses’ reins were placed in his hands.

“You woke up just in time! You can drive the carriage instead of me!”

Leylin pushed the whip into Baelin’s hands and sat back to enjoy this free manpower of his.

Baelin’s physique was that of a Grand Knight, and thus, he woke up before Jenny. However, Jenny was still a level 1 acolyte, so she woke up soon after Baelin.

“Very good reaction!”

Leylin looked at Jenny who was still pretending to be unconscious as he touched Jenny’s hand and complimented her indifferently.

“So it’s Mister Leylin!” Jenny shuddered and opened her eyes, “I thought it was the bad guys!”

Afterwards, she opened the carriage window and looked out of it to see that there was no grey mist.

“Have we already left the Weeping Ghost Grounds? Where is James?”

“Yes, we are now in Olive Fields. We will be seeing the capital city of the eastern region of the Twilight Zone in two days at most.”

Leylin slowly nodded, “As for James, you had best prepare yourself mentally...”

A short while later, Baelin, who was driving outside of the carriage, heard Jenny cry out in alarm, “No, it can not be so. You are telling a lie!”

Bang! The carriage door opened, from which a tearful Jenny could be seen.

“Jenny, you...” Seeing Jenny look so broken-hearted, Baelin was bewildered.

Sob! Sob! Jenny threw herself into Baelin’s embrace and began to cry loudly.

.....

The Twilight Zone was divided into 5 regions: the east, west, north, south, and central regions. The capital city of the eastern region was the most flourishing city in all the Twilight Zone and was also the center of politics and business.

Many aristocratic families had set up their headquarters here, forming the aristocrats' alliance which held a major influence in the entire eastern region.

There were also many Magi conducting research and establishing academies in secret locations there, which caused this place to be a meeting point for magicians.

In the center of the city, there was a sun stone that was the size of a small mountain, which brought eternal light and heat to this entire region.

"The city's walls are very tall!"

On this day, in the eastern region's capital city, a country bumpkin could be seen gaping at this tall and sturdy castle wall.

"Enough!" Leylin used the sheath of his sword to hit Baelin on the head, stopping him from continuing to behave like this.

Although the eastern region's capital city looked huge, as he looked around, it seemed to Leylin that it was the same as Nightless City. As a result, the way Baelin behaved made Leylin feel ashamed.

"You really are causing me to lose face," he reprimanded Baelin.

Hearing this, Baelin rubbed his head and looked at the surroundings, only pointing at the citizens from time to time. Only after a while did he smile in embarrassment as he said, "Lord! From the day I was born, I have never set eyes upon such tall city walls. I'm really sorry..."

Leylin was rather speechless. If not for the number of people around, he may have even harboured thoughts of killing Baelin right there and then.

"Tee hee... Lord Leylin, Baelin has only seen Potter Town until now. This degree of astonishment is quite a reasonable reaction!"

At this moment, Jenny, who was nursing her sorrow, was amused by Baelin's behaviour. She sniggered as she helped Baelin out of his predicament.

However, after seeing Jenny answer for him, Baelin drooped his head in embarrassment, not doing any other potential things that could be unbearable to look at.

After all, in front of the girl he loved, Baelin still had to put up some poise.

"Alright! Since we have sent Miss Jenny back safely, we should bid our farewells now!"

The atmosphere in the horse carriage turned silent, yet Leylin still smiled and faced Jenny.

"What?!" "What!?" Two shocked gasps were uttered by the two youths.

"Wh...Why? This is too sudden!" Baelin felt that something was amiss, yet he could not put his thoughts into words.

"Lord Leylin! I still request that you visit my Argus Family. My father will definitely wish to have your acquaintance, and Baelin's as well!"

Jenny bit her lips.

"From the start, I mentioned that we were only travelling together out of convenience!"

Leylin's expression turned resolute. "As for you, Baelin, you can return with Jenny! Furthermore, there are already people coming to receive you, Jenny!" He smiled.

Thud Thud

Right after Leylin spoke, the continuous thuds of hooves of horses sounded out. The approaching party was a group of white Knights sitting upon handsome steeds. On the tops of their helmets was a white feathered ornament. Their armour had not even a single speck of dust, and even their horses were fully white in colour!

Chapter 312: Settling Down

There was a shiny insignia on the flags held by this group of white Knights.

Lush sun vines formed the border of the insignia, and in the middle were a giant sword and shield. On the top lay a crown, which represented the profound origins and illustrious history of the household.

“It’s the Sun Vine Argus Family!”

“That well-known family where the Marquis is!”

“That is their ‘Silver-White Knight Squadron. Could it be that some important figure of the Argus Family is setting out on a journey?”

The citizens and passers-by fervently discussed amongst themselves, and Baelin put on an extremely complex expression.

“I’ll get going!” Jenny looked at Baelin and spoke.

“Oh? Eh! Alright!” Baelin replied sluggishly. Only now did he realise how great a distance he was from Jenny.

“Let’s us leave too, my lord!” Baelin sucked in a cold breath of air and spoke with resolve.

“We will remain in the city for a period. As for the location, I’m sure you don’t need to know. You’ll definitely be able to find us, won’t you?”

Leylin spoke to Jenny, before disappearing into the crowd along with Baelin.

As for Jenny, she inhaled deeply as she clutched onto the pouch that contained the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud.

“Miss! Our men have immediately reported your arrival upon receiving the news. We are here to escort you home!”

The leader of the Silver-White Knight squadron looked at Jenny as he took out a badge with a red jewel embedded in it.

“Alright! Let us quickly enter the city! This time, I have completed the

mission of bringing back the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud for my father!"

Jenny muttered.

.....

Very soon, she was escorted by the squadron leader to a lavish horse-drawn carriage. This young lady of nobility shed a tear, as she could no longer hold her emotions in...

Twilight Zone's eastern capital was extremely large. The permanent residents amounted to over a hundred thousand people. Of course, most of them were just regular folks. Even so, it brought about an extremely wealthy economy in the area.

As they were in the subterranean world, the architecture of the buildings and the items sold here were different from those on the south coast. From Leylin's observations, everything was engineered with defense in mind. The whole capital was like a massive fortress. Even the buildings themselves within were built with their defensive capabilities in mind.

"It seems like the environment for the humans in the subterranean world isn't that great. It might even be inferior to that on the south coast..." Leylin pondered as he analysed his observations.

In the south coast, any danger would have long since been driven away or controlled by the Magi. Not one species would engage in a long battle with the humans, hence the living conditions were better there.

However, it was a different story here! Apart from humans, several other intelligent beings resided in the Twilight Zone. Some of them even had their own kingdoms!

Hence, the horde of darkness beasts that forever lay in the shadows was the greatest nemesis for all intelligent beings.

Under such harsh conditions and the struggle for survival, the buildings and houses were not made to pursue aesthetic beauty, but rather, they were built with defense in mind, which was crucial for their survival.

"My lord! What are we going to do here?"

Baelin carried a knapsack and a greatsword. He gave off an extremely gallant disposition, yet he wore a vacant expression on his face.

Their reason for leaving Potter Town was to send Jenny back. However, now that she had safely returned, Baelin felt that part of his heart was vacant as if something of importance had gone missing.

“First of all, find some lodging, and then rent a building!”

Leylin looked at the bustling crowd and smiled. “After all, the inns in the capital aren’t cheap! If we want to stay for long, we’ll have to buy or rent a flat...”

“Settling down? We’re going to stay here instead of returning?”

Baelin could not express his current feelings. However, permanent residence? Thinking that he could be in the same city as Jenny, it immediately turned into a happy thought.

“En! Is there anything in Potter Town that is worth being nostalgic over?”

Leylin grinned at Baelin until the little chap bowed his head down in embarrassment.

This poor fellow thought that it was because of him that Leylin had decided to reside here permanently; he thought that it was so that his heart would be filled with gratitude towards Leylin.

Alas! On the contrary, this was based on Leylin’s own interests.

After recovering part of his strength, Leylin could wait no longer to get into contact with the Magi of the subterranean world. Although Leylin had exercised a mind searching technique on Aaron and the other acolytes, much of the information that he had gleaned was still incomplete. Due to their lack of status, no precious information could be obtained.

Furthermore, the circles of official Magi and regular acolytes were on two completely different levels. Leylin had no desire whatsoever to even take a look at the bazaar area that he got from Aaron’s memories.

As for the eastern capital, it definitely had many Magi and academies for

Leylin to come into contact with.

Even the Magus forefather of the Argus Family was an excellent choice!

Not long later, Leylin brought Baelin to the upper-class district on the northern side of the capital and rented a two-storey villa.

The area of the villa was rather vast, and its walls were sturdy and tall. As for its windows, they were both tiny and few in number.

Within the tall fences with coiled barbed wire laying on top of it, there was a tiny garden and a training ground.

A villa of this standard was considered way above average in the eastern city. Typical merchants and nobility would not even be able to afford it.

However, this was just peanuts to him.

Even without considering the vast amounts of magic crystals that he carried, just the gold he had gotten from Jenny was enough for them to live extravagantly for a couple of years!

Back in Potter Town, Jenny had almost cleanly swept all of Leylin's highly-priced equipment off the shelves for the use of her employed mercenaries and adventurers. Later on, to thank Leylin, who had lent her a hand together with Baelin, she sent even more gold and jewels to him.

To Magi, items such as currency were not essential items. Hence, Leylin was extremely generous with his purchases. Finding a villa and preparing the procedural documents was only hastened with the help of this worldly wealth.

"Ha! He!" A steady and loud shout sounded.

Leylin put down the coffee and newspaper he was carrying as he peered out of the window and towards the training ground.

Baelin stood on the training ground as he practiced, his bare upper body revealing his chiseled muscles.

After settling down, this fellow had turned even more diligent, training like a mad man each day. He even sought Leylin's permission to join a mercenary group to hone his skills.

“Still harbouring the dreams of a knight being together with a princess? Interesting!”

Leylin looked at the youth with interest, “If I had a word in things, and had helped him in reaching his goal, his dreams would most likely be fulfilled. But why would I? The glory of a story lies in the unknown!”

To him, Baelin was just a chap that he picked up on a whim to do odd jobs for him. Occasionally, he would guide him in some Knight training, but other than that, it was not worth it to spend any more effort on him.

On the contrary, as he was very curious about the developments of the story between Baelin and Jenny, Leylin had adopted the mindset of an audience member watching a show.

Ever since he obtained the premonition through the Sacred Flame by chance, he knew that Baelin and Jenny were no regular folks. To be more precise, they were some of the main characters in the Twilight Zone.

Such a life would definitely be anything but ordinary!

Suddenly, Leylin smiled. “Finally here?”

Loud doorbells sounded from the front gate.

“Who is that?” Baelin took a white towel from a wooden rack beside him and wiped off his perspiration as he ran to open a small, partitioned box on the door.

Just then, Baelin saw the girl of his dreams.

“Jen...Jenny, why are you here?” Glee was written all over Baelin’s face.

“Why? Am I not welcome?” Jenny smiled.

“Welcome! Of course, you’re welcome here!” Baelin immediately opened the door. Jenny walked in wearing the outfit of a noble; her beauty and elegance left Baelin awestruck.

It was obvious that Jenny did her makeup delicately. Not only was her attire vibrant with various ornaments, she even wore two giant ruby earrings and a sparkling diamond pendant.

“What is it? Do you not recognise me anymore?” Jenny chuckled as she spun in a circle.

“No! I mean... You’re too ravishing today!” Baelin’s face immediately turned as red as an apple.

This helpless reaction left the maidservants behind Jenny snickering. In addition, it was only then that Baelin noticed the several Knights standing alongside the maidservants.

This discovery left him feeling a little gloomy, but it was very soon concealed.

“Jenny! Has your father’s illness gotten any better?” Baelin asked.

“Yes, thank you! It’s much better now, but things are getting complicated! The purpose of my visit today was for this, and of course, also to see you!” Jenny swept her eyes at the vicinity.

“Where is Mister Leylin? I wish to be granted an audience with him!”

“The lord is in the house! I... I’ll report to him!” Baelin now had an urge to cry.

“No need for that, I’ve heard it!”

Pa! The windows were pulled open, revealing half of Leylin’s figure. “Do enter, beautiful miss!”

Jenny did not dare tarry facing this official Magus, so she curtsied and entered after telling her subordinates to stay outside.

In the guest chambers, Jenny sat opposite Leylin and between them were two coffees. As for Baelin, he stood behind Leylin.

There were only these three people in the guest chamber.

With a wave of Leylin’s hand, the room was covered by a layer of black energy particles.

Chapter 313: Magus Tower

The whole drawing room seemed to be covered by a black halo of light, and even the cracks on the window were also completely sealed off as if they had been covered with a layer of black cotton.

This kind of strange scene caused Baelin to be amazed. Feeling curious, he tried to touch the 'black cotton.' The light quickly refilled the path that his hand passed through Baelin enjoyed this very much, and when he looked at Leylin, his expression was much more respectful than in the past.

During this journey, Baelin had come to know of Leylin's identity as an official Magus from Jenny and James.

For Baelin, who was from Potter Town, a Knight was already considered to be an awesome, lordly identity. However, a Magus? This was already something that was only heard of in legends.

In fact, Baelin had always fantasized about becoming a Magus and wielding the powers of lightning, fire, and ice.

This was also because if he could become a Magus, he would be able to marry Jenny.

But unfortunately, all his hopes were easily dashed by Leylin's words "you don't have any talent in this field".

Leylin also noticed that Baelin's aptitude was poor, at only around level 1, which was known as the least suitable aptitude for becoming a Magus; he could only remain as an acolyte during his entire lifetime.

However, even if he did not have a suitable aptitude, if he was diligently taught, he might possibly be able to become an acolyte! The identity of an acolyte was much better when compared to a Knight.

However, the problem was that training an acolyte required a lot more time and energy than training a Knight. Now that they were no longer at Potter Town, Leylin did not have any time for leisure, so why would he waste time on Baelin? Thus, Leylin had turned down Baelin's request

without the slightest hesitation.

Even so, Baelin was very interested in the mysterious power wielded by magicians.

“Okay, this place has been sealed by me. If you have something to say, say it. It will remain a secret between us.”

Leylin spoke out.

After hearing Leylin’s words, Jenny grimaced as she said, “As expected, nothing can be hidden from Lord Leylin.”

“Eh? Jenny, did you not come to visit us?” Now, Baelin finally reacted. He was about to make a fuss, but Leylin quelled him with a warning glance. Baelin quieted down and listened attentively to Jenny’s narration.

“After having received the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud, my father’s condition has greatly improved. He is now able to get up from bed and handle simple tasks, and his spirit has also improved a lot...”

Jenny looked slightly cheered up for a moment, but in the next, her expression darkened again.

“But good things don’t last long. Taking advantage of the fact that my father was recuperating, my two uncles once again convened a family meeting. They want to usurp my father’s title...”

“I came here today to seek help from you.”

Jenny stood up and performed an official curtsy to Leylin and said, “My lord, if only you can help my father get past this current crisis, we will repay you with anything, including my own self.”

“Jenny! You!” Listening to this, Baelin became anxious, but he felt helpless, as he could not do anything to help her.

“Hehe....”

Hearing what Jenny said, Leylin remained composed and began to mutter to himself. When Jenny began to believe that Leylin had been possessed, he began to laugh out loud.

“I have no intentions of participating in the Argus Family’s matter. However, I will pay your family a visit in three days’ time...”

About a quarter of an hour later, Jenny left after having gotten what she wanted. Although Leylin hadn’t clearly stated which side he would support, a good relationship with an official Magus was something no family would dare to neglect.

But what Jenny did not notice was that after she left, Leylin’s lips curved up in a sneering smile.

“You hid so many things, yet you are still counting on me to come and help you. Do you people think I am an ignorant person with nothing better to do?”

The reason why Jenny’s uncles dared to openly go against her and be so brazen is likely because they have a powerful backer and a high certainty of succeeding, thus forcing the original successor to seek external help. With such a guarantee, Leylin was 70% sure that they had gotten approval from Siegfried!

In such a situation, Jenny and her dad placed all their hopes on Leylin, even sacrificing Jenny herself as the bait and the gift.

“Hehe... do you really believe that I would involve myself in your matters for the sake of Baelin’s happiness? Unfortunately, Baelin’s happiness, and even his life are only like toys to me...”

With a ruminating smile, Leylin glanced at the towering figure of Baelin standing near the gate.

.....

Three days later, Leylin, dressed in the black ceremonial suit of the nobility, visited the Argus Family with Baelin in tow.

“Lord Leylin, to be seeing you is an honor in itself.”

Having been informed by the servant, Jenny and her father, the Marquis Argus, came out and greeted Leylin.

Leylin also sized up Marquis Argus while he acknowledged his greeting

with a smile. This marquis had a full head of hair that was as bright as gold and shared many physical characteristics with Jenny. He currently wore a warm, cordial, and appropriate-to-this-occasion smile on his face.

Behind him, two servants bowed with bent waists—this was a most sincere and deferential invitation to come in.

“En!” Leylin indifferently grunted and nodded his head, and alongside Marquis Argus, he walked in. Afterwards, Leylin walked slightly ahead of the Marquis.

A Magus originally possessed a lot of stamina and authority. After seeing Leylin walk ahead of him, the Marquis’ smile only became more fervent, as if he did not care about these matters.

Behind the two were Baelin and Jenny. Baelin opened his mouth on several occasions, wanting to talk to Jenny, but after he saw the solemn Jenny, who was dressed up as if to attend a royal feast, he was unable to say anything, and just closed his mouth.

It went without saying that this serene, well-constructed mansion of a marquis, as well as the respectful and cautious servants that stood on both sides of him as he walked past, all frightened the wits out of this youngster.

After welcoming Leylin, the marquis thought to introduce Leylin to the other relatives but was interrupted by a sudden voice.

“Ohoho! My dearest older brother, if you invited so many guests, why did you not invite us too?”

Upon hearing this voice, the marquis’s smile remained, but a trace of wariness appeared in his eyes as he introduced the owner of the voice to Leylin.

“My lord, these are my two brothers, Lucas and Kermode.”

Then he turned to the two men who had entered the hall and said, “This is Lord Leylin, who met Jenny while she was on her journey.”

“These two must be the treacherous uncles that Jenny said are trying to

usurp her father's position." With just a glance, Leylin had, with a lot of interest, sized up these two middle-aged lords.

Lucas, Kermode, and Marquis Argus all looked alike—after all, they were brothers! However, Lucas' eyes were purple and Kermode's eyes emitted a silvery radiance. It was all very strange.

But what caused Leylin to feel startled was that these two uncles' bodies emitted energy waves that were like those of magicians. These two were actually acolytes!

"We greet Lord Leylin!" At this moment, these two lords also respectfully bowed to Leylin. The Marquis found this behavior of theirs very hard-to-believe.

"Respected Lord Leylin, my ancestor Lord Siegfried cordially invites you to visit him and look around his laboratory. Also, he expresses his gratitude to you for having given a helping hand to the Argus Family."

Lucas respectfully conveyed his ancestor's words.

This invitation caused sunken expressions to appear on the Marquis' and his daughter's faces.

In this entire drama, only the foolish youth known as Baelin was unclear on what the significance of this invitation was!

The Magus Siegfried held a position of paramount importance within the Argus Family. Sending this invitation via Lucas and not via the marquis clearly indicated whom Siegfried was supporting.

"I am very honoured." Leylin gave a slight nod and then immediately left the place, following Lucas, all the while not glancing at the ashen-faced marquis and Jenny.

In the secular world, Magi all had very headstrong personalities due to the power they all wielded

Before leaving, Lucas and Kermode looked at Marquis Argus in contempt, making the atmosphere awkward all around.

"What is going on?"

The rather stunned Baelin asked Jenny, having just come out of the daze caused by the recent happenings.

Although Baelin's intuition told him to follow behind Leylin, looking at Jenny caused him to involuntarily remain beside her.

"It's...it's nothing... My family's ancestor wants to meet Lord Leylin."

Jenny was barely able to smile.

Ka-ching!

A sound of breaking glass was heard as the goblet in Marquis Argus' hands shattered into pieces, crushed by him gripping it too tightly.

.....

Leylin, following Lucas and Kermode, arrived at the back half the Argus Family's mansion.

The further he went in, the tighter the security was, but with these two people leading the way, Leylin traveled unhindered, and reached the middle of the rear courtyard.

"Finally! Our ancestor, Lord Siegfried is in here. We ask for your forgiveness, as we are not allowed to accompany you in."

Lucas and Kermode brought Leylin in front of a huge conical tower, and then bowed and left. Each and every movement of them was executed perfectly, showing the flawless deportment of the nobility.

Leylin failed to pay any attention to them, as he was distracted by the white tower in front of him.

"Stability runes, restriction runes and runes which can transmute mud into stone! This is some very good construction. Moreover, I can sense the aura of energy particles in the air. It looks as if within this building, there is a source of at least two elements' energy particles."

Leylin gently stroked the surface of the white tower with admiration in his eyes and sighed.

This white tower, the curves of which were similar to those of a cow's

horn, was built by a Magus.

Just the expenses of the solidification runes and the cost of building the pond of energy particles left Leylin in astonishment.

It is a construction worthy of a Magus that has lived for several hundreds of years. If I wanted to set up a tower like this, I would need to spend at least half of the resources that are currently in my pouch...

While thinking this, Leylin sighed.

A specialized and private laboratory held many advantages. Not only was it magically concealed, one could carry out covert experiments within it.

However, since Leylin had no fixed residence, there was no way that he could construct such a tower for himself.

Chapter 314: Gaia's Might

“Haha... an outdated work such as this can also get a sigh of admiration from Magus Leylin? It is indeed my honour!”

At that moment, the door at the base of the white tower opened, revealing a linen-clothed old guy, who grinned at Leylin. It was evident that he had overheard Leylin's deliberate sigh.

“This humble self is Siegfried Argus! I greet Lord Leylin.”

This old guy's expression was respectful, and he slightly bent his waist to bow, as was per the Magus' etiquette.

This etiquette was passed down from ancient times, and was something Leylin had only seen in ancient books. He remained unfazed and repeated the same bow as he said, “I, Leylin, greet Lord Siegfried!”

After the perfunctory greetings were done with, Leylin was able to size up this Lord Siegfried.

Siegfried's style of clothing was very casual, as if it could be torn apart with a single pull. It was more leisurely and comfortable compared to the splendid attire of the lords in the outer hall.

The current Siegfried was not someone that Leylin would associate as being the trump card of a great family. If it weren't for his right-hand, Leylin would have assumed Lord Siegfried was just a peasant farmer.

That was right! His right-hand! This Siegfried's right hand was a robotic limb that gave off an awesome, bright, metallic lustre; even the gears and the welded portions were clearly visible.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

Siegfried extended this right hand as he said, “I shall call you Leylin. I lost my right hand permanently while experimenting with a spell. I know that a flesh and muscle hand can be transplanted, but I find that a mechanical hand is much more useful.”

Bang! Then, his mechanical hand split open into finger-like parts, which

were tools like tweezers, scissors, pliers, etc., and they were wildly swaying in mid air, looking like silver colored tassels.

“How is it? This ‘hand’ was created especially for me, using my specific measurements, by my old friend, an Earth Elf called Grandmaster Oak!”

“Very good.” Leylin nodded. This kind of a very precise machine limb is extremely rare even in the south coast and thus Leylin was also not stingy with his praises.

It was clear that this Siegfried was very happy with the admiration from a fellow Magus.

He then invited Leylin into his lab to look.

“Siegfried, did you build an energy particle pond in here?”

Due to Leylin’s graceful and cultured mannerisms, he soon became friends with Siegfried. They addressed each other directly by their first names.

This showed how well their relationship had progressed.

While Leylin casually walked around Siegfried’s lab, he came in front of what looked like a small pond and he asked this question.

This small pond was surrounded by stable, ferrous metals. On top of the pool was a strange and complex pattern and in the middle of the pool was a khaki-colored liquid.

A large number of energy waves could be felt fluctuating from the pool.

“Yes, I have built here an earth element energy particle pond. This task consumed all of the resources that I have accumulated for nearly a hundred years!”

Siegfried’s face appeared to experience a muscle spasm, but the next moment, it was replaced with an expression of pride.

“After building this energy particle pond, the concentration of earth element particles in this place has increased to 55% and the results of my cultivation have been more remarkable when compared to using just meditation techniques.”

The element particle pond's ability was not restricted to the one mentioned prior. Magi could use the energy within this pond to replenish themselves in a crucial moment, and the element particles within could be used to attack enemies.

Thus, a Magus having such a pond would be stronger within his own territory when compared with his peers.

With his strength as a semi-converted elemental Magus, within this white tower, Siegfried's attack power would be roughly equal to that of a 70-80% converted elemental Magus.

"Oh, that's right, I haven't properly introduced myself. I am a reputed instructor at the Earth Fire Association, and I cultivated using their high level meditation technique, the Gaia's Might! It is divided into three layers: earth, magma, and organisms. I am currently still in the stage of earth. A high level meditation technique's progress is too slow..."

Having said this, he looked at Leylin with curiosity, very much interested in the background of this Magus.

"It seems that sharing one's experiences with a high-level meditation technique is a tradition amongst the Magi of the Twilight Zone..." As this information flashed through Leylin's mind, he smiled very modestly, "I come from a very small institute known as Goodlaw! This institute specializes in researching in ancient reptilian creatures. It is very focused in that field. I cultivate with a damaged high level meditation technique called the Sacred Flame! Currently, I am stagnated in the first level of that meditation technique..."

After that, he explained, in simple terms, the first level of the Sacred Flame and its difficulties. As expected, he concealed that mystical ability to predict forthcoming events.

"Hu... Leylin! This meditation technique of yours is quite badly damaged." Stroking his beard, Siegfried's eyes shone as he looked at Leylin. "How about you join our Earth Fire Association? Our high-level meditation techniques are more whole as compared to your Sacred Flame, and moreover, we could continue to share our experiences..."

“No thank you!” Leylin shook his head, “Changing meditation techniques is too dangerous. I advanced to a level 1 Magus by depending on my Sacred Flame technique. I can’t get rid of the impact it has on my spiritual force in such a short time. Moreover, I also want to pass on my Goodlaw School’s inheritance, as it was my teacher’s dying wish that I do so.”

Leylin’s tone remained firm and unwavering; it spoke of his resolve.

He knew that this invitation of Siegfried’s was only small talk, and that it was not actually sincere. Moreover, in a situation where he did not know about the Fire Earth Association, he did not want to rashly become one of its members.

“En! That’s right, acolytes can switch meditation techniques, but for a level 1 Magus, after his sea of consciousness is stabilized, it would be extremely troublesome if he decided to switch out his meditation technique.”

Siegfried also solemnly agreed; it seemed that a while ago, he had spoken out without thinking.

As for Leylin’s background, he did not have a speck of doubt regarding that.

After a memory search on Aaron, and having spent two years in Potter Town, Leylin had already grasped the customs, traditions, and manners of speech of humans of the underworld. He gave no indications that he was not from their world.

In addition, there were countless acolytes in the subterranean world, and schools that had only one or two Magi to pass on the inheritance were similarly too many to count. And perhaps one day when these Magi could not find the right apprentices to inherit meditation techniques, that school would naturally cease existing.

As for other lucky magicians who had obtained high-level meditation techniques, they would be considered the pillars of support for passing down inheritances in their small academies.

Thus, even if he hadn't heard of any Goodlaw, Siegfried believed Leylin to be only a disciple of some small-scale academy—perhaps even a bright shining disciple who was his school's sole Magus. Siegfried even felt some sympathy towards Leylin.

“Not only are high grade meditation techniques easy at first and difficult later, the further one advances the more difficult it becomes to keep advancing. For a Magus to train in them, they must meet some very lofty requirements in regards to their physique and spirit. It would be no easy task for an acolyte to find a complete meditation technique that is suited to him.”

Leylin nodded in agreement with what Siegfried said.

With a high-grade meditation technique, a magician at the acolyte or level 1 Magus stage could easily advance, but then onwards, it would become harder. In addition, finding a complete meditation technique that would suit one's own physique depended upon one's character and luck.

Even Leylin was initially unsuitable to practise the Kemoyin's Pupil technique. Only after transplanting the bloodline did he have the qualifications to study that high-level meditation technique.

No matter how difficult it was to advance using a high-level meditation technique, Magi who used such techniques were much better off when compared to those Magi of the south coast who advanced by depending on resources.

Siegfried's magician tower was divided into 5 floors. The lowest floor was where the refined metal puppets stood guard. On the second floor, there were rooms that stored treasures and junk.

The third floor consisted of a magician's garden, a room for cultivation, and a room for training. The fourth floor had the lab and the elemental pool. The fifth and final floor contained his bedroom, a room where he received visitors, and other rooms for similar domestic purposes.

After Leylin had taken a look around the tower, he was invited by Siegfried to go to the fifth floor.

“Now, can you tell me the purpose of your visit, Leylin?”

The two of them had enjoyed their afternoon tea along with some light refreshments before they each took a seat on the sofa. The old man, with a wise expression in his eyes, laughed and then asked Leylin that question.

“Well, the fact is....” Leylin paid attention to how he phrased his next words.

“I have been wandering around in the Woody Wastelands, and do not understand much about the current situation of Magus powers in the capital. After hearing Jenny say that her family had an existence such as yourself, I decided to pay a visit!”

“Another reason is that she and her father had spent a lot of effort in inviting me over.”

“Hehe. You are very frank!” Siegfried wore a happy smile. “Regarding these descendants of mine, I have no interest in their matters. In my opinion, they are all a pack of feral wolves, and only an alpha wolf chosen after a bitter competition will have the qualifications to lead the Argus Family.”

He let his descendants cruelly fight it out amongst themselves, and from amongst them, he would choose the one who was capable of wielding power within the family.

This kind of speech that was dripping with blood showed the cold and detached outlook of a Magus who had lived a long time.

Leylin could also understand some of Siegfried’s thoughts. It seemed that he had already cut off any feelings he had for his close relatives; these blood-related descendants of his were no better than strangers to him.

Because it was like this, Siegfried would be so cold and detached, and consider them as mere beasts or even commodities to be traded.

“Recently, Lucas had contributed an item that was of some use to me, and because of that, I have started favouring him.”

Siegfried indifferently talked about the internal disputes in his family,

“Of course, if Leylin is taking Jenny’s side, then I shall immediately put an end to Lucas’ dreams.”

As far as Siegfried was concerned, Lucas was but one amongst the younger generation, while Leylin’s status was on the same level as his own.

Thus, to strengthen their relationship, no hesitation was needed if sacrificing a small benefit of Lucas was needed.

Chapter 315: Secret Knight Technique

“Oh! No no no! I think you’ve misunderstood me!” Leylin hurriedly shook his head.

“While I am acquainted to Jenny, I also have no intentions whatsoever to partake in the Argus Family’s internal strife!”

Leylin made his stand.

With just one sentence, the calamity that was befalling Jenny and her father would be resolved. Even Lucas would not hold any objections anymore. However, what has all this got to do with Leylin?

Not only that, but after influencing Siegfried’s decision Leylin would owe him a favour! Favours are oftentimes the most difficult of things to repay!

Moreover, directly interfering with another Magus’ family matters could be seen as being disrespectful.

Whether or not Siegfried chose to mask his emotions, he would definitely be displeased about it.

Leylin did not concern himself with these issues. On one hand, Jenny’s father had some worldly factions supporting him while on the other hand, Lucas had the backing of Siegfried. There was simply no hesitation when weighing the benefits.

After all, with his years of experience, he was already used to making decisions by weighing benefits. This was also the principle that Magi practiced.

As expected, after hearing Leylin’s words, Siegfried smiled even more broadly. “Leylin, I think you are still unfamiliar with the Magi factions in the capital right? Don’t worry, you can pay me a visit to learn more about it whenever you like. I’ll also bring you to some Magi organisational places for networking and to make some new friends!”

“That’ll be fantastic!” After achieving the goal he came for, Leylin revealed his joy.

Leylin and Siegfried then exchanged some information that they knew about high-grade meditation techniques. Although Siegfried had amassed a bountiful amount of information for 250 years, he was still somewhat amazed by some of the theoretical practices simulated by the A.I. Chip. So much so that he almost wanted to immediately have them undergo practical tests. This was a form of acknowledgement of Leylin's scholarly knowledge. As for Leylin, he respected the time that Siegfried had placed into his experiments.

After their sharing of information, both parties felt that the time spent was extremely short. Hence, only after setting a date for their next meeting did Siegfried reluctantly send Leylin off.

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Now that Leylin had neglected to help Jenny's father, the series of events that happened could only be expected.

During the Argus Family's council, Lucas had amassed enough backing to take on the role of the next family head and to obtain the status of a Marquis!

During that very same night, the original Marquis died a painful death from a poison attack!

As for Jenny, she was accused of putting poison inside the Dragon-Blooded Flower Bud, thereby murdering her father.

Anyone with a discerning eye could tell that this was the lowest kind of set-up with a childish ploy. However, Lucas wanted to use this very method to know who stood on his side within the family and at the same time establish his dominance!

This deliberate misrepresentation of making a deer out to be a horse was done to punish Jenny, and to set an example for others.

After using a few lightning quick moves to rid himself of the opposing factions within the family, Lucas had a firm grip on the powers within the Argus Family. The entire family implicitly allowed this to carry on, and even corroborated the story of Jenny poisoning her own father!

Power struggles were often this harsh. Win, and become king. Lose, and become a dog. This was but another example of the bloody battles in this dog eat dog world.

“Hu..Huu...”

Jenny dashed rapidly through a dark forest.

This girl of noble birth had now lost her elegant and haughty appearance. Her skirt had already been torn apart by the shrubberies. Blood streaked her face and she had an extremely miserable appearance; worse than a beggar's.

“Dearest father!” Tears streaked down her face as she continued running.

The events had transpired so quickly that they left Jenny thinking that the whole thing was all but a dream.

Her backing, which was her very own father, had died just like that through a conspiracy. Worse yet, she was labelled as the murderer!

Dear heavens! Jenny did not know how perverted one had to be to brandish her as the murderer!

However, what followed next left her speechless. Under the immense political power, such absurdity was validated by the others, and even labelled her as a wanted criminal.

In fact, if not for the few loyal servants and kin who had tipped her off and protected her along the way, she would definitely not be able to escape with just her strength as a level 1 acolyte.

Of course, after helping her, those close ones encountered terrible fates.

Plop! Jenny stumbled on a tree root as she ran. Mud was splashed in the area as this young lady sobbed spasmodically as she knelt on the ground.

Even if she managed to escape this time, what good would there be ahead of her? Be it other nobles or even the common folk, she would be seen as a murderer. Her eventual outcome would either to be caught and be sentenced to execution, or to hide her name and honour in dirt, never

revealing her identity. Just from thinking about this fact, Jenny adopted a bleak outlook for her future.

“Wuu...Why...Why did things turn out this way?” Jenny cried.

“Jejeje! Look at the pathetic state you’re in!”

At this moment, a familiar voice sounded behind her back, leaving shudders throughout her body.

She turned around and saw a tall Knight in armour, who had a malevolent scar across his face.

“‘Dagger’ Todd, one of my father’s personal bodyguards, even you dare to betray me?”

This man had the terrifying strength of a Grand Knight, and was even one of her father’s own bodyguards, and as such commanded quite a lot of trust.

Todd only sniggered towards the lamentations of the young lady. However, his smile made his scarred face look even more horrifying.

“In fact, I’ve always been on Lucas’ side. So there is no betrayal per se!”

Jenny’s pupils dilated as she suddenly got a bad premonition.

“And as the reward of being an undercover operative, Lord Lucas has allowed me to seek pleasure with you before killing you!” Todd licked his lips and revealed a wanton grin.

“Five years! A full five years of listening to you call me Uncle Todd! In reality, during my duties I have thought frequently of possessing you, feasting on you, ripping you!”

“You! You sick pervert!” After listening to the man admitting to the desires of wanting her even since she was a ten year old girl, Jenny’s hair stood on ends.

“Yes! I’m a pervert, but what can you do about it? Missy of the Argus Family!”

Todd advanced as he peeled off his gloves, “Relax, I will give you a great

time...”

Jenny scuttled backwards, as if Todd was some kind of terrifying beast.

However, Todd was, in this moment, worse than a monster!

“Save me! Help, someone please save me!”

The girl wailed helplessly as tears streamed down her face.

“Stop!”

“At this moment, a extremely youthful voice sounded. What followed soon after was the wind caused from a blade being swung!

“Eh?” Todd jumped back and looked at the lad who had emerged from nowhere.

“Baelin!” Jenny snuggled into Baelin’s arms as she sobbed quietly.

“You bastard, I’m going to kill you!” Baelin stared coldly at the large Knight in front of him. He seethed in fury, for had he arrived a moment later, something bad would have happened to Jenny.

It was the first time in his life that Baelin wanted to kill someone so badly!

“Kill me? Are you able to?” Todd unsheathed the sword hung at his waist. “You must be this missy’s lover! I’ve decided that I will first chop off your four limbs, then take her right in front of you! At the time, your expression will definitely be extremely fascinating to watch. Perhaps, you can even join us...”

Todd licked his lips and smirked.

“Arghhhh....!” Baelin swung his cross blade that carried a flash of white light as he could not bear to listen for a moment longer.

“Grand Knight!” Todd turned solemn immediately.

His giant sword was swung forward as it clashed with the cross blade, emitting sparks.

Clang Clang Clang! Todd retreated several steps. “What power!” The vibrations sent from Baelin’s swing left his hands somewhat numb.

“Kill him Baelin! Kill him!” Jenny wailed loudly behind Baelin.

Under the encouragement of his loved one, Baelin advanced and struck, sending Todd staggering backwards by several steps.

“Ping!” Just as the two weapons clashed, Todd suddenly released his giant sword and rushed to Baelin’s side like a sweeping wind.

Ka-cha! A black dagger suddenly appeared in his hand and pierced towards Baelin’s heart like a venomous snake!

Baelin struggled to move his body away, and a layer of spiritual life force appeared on his chest. Pak! As if thin leather, the dagger pierced through and left a deep gash on Baelin’s chest, allowing blood to flow profusely.

Shing! Todd suddenly appeared from a distance away as he licked the edge of his dagger.

“Now you’d know why they call me ‘Dagger’ huh? Because I like to cut the flesh of my prey with this dagger, and then watch them die of anguish!”

Todd’s face turned red and he spoke excitedly, “Your blood is the tastiest I’ve ever tried!”

“Secret Gale Technique!” Todd shouted and spiritual life force wrapped around his calves.

Shik Shik! He advanced again, this time even faster than before!

“Damn it! Secret technique, Cross Star!”

After suffering from several more wounds, Baelin could not bear it any longer and shouted.

Weng! His body suddenly doubled in size as a layer of translucent armour protected him.

Chapter 316: Chamber of Commerce

"Ka-cha!"

Todd's black dagger slashed across the translucent armour, but it harmlessly bounced off.

"It's a defensive secret technique!" Todd's eyes gleamed.

There were many secret techniques for Grand Knights, but many of them were just a large boost in a single attribute.

For example, Todd's secret technique focused on speed, raising it to twice his original speed!

From what he could see, Baelin had mustered a technique that boosted his defense.

"Dummy, once your technique wears off, you will still be slain by me!" A sinister smile appeared on Todd's face.

However, Baelin suddenly moved!

Speed! Baelin was extremely quick; as he moved, his translucent armour created a shrill noise from the wind passing through.

Todd could only see the bare afterimages!

"It's...actually the two attributes buff!" Todd cried out hoarsely, yet the greed in his eyes only grew more apparent.

Such a technique was of a considerably high grade that existed only in myths. Even the Argus Family had not seen anyone wielding such a technique for the longest of times.

However, Todd did not have much time to think. Baelin had already appeared in front of him as he raised his cross blade, furiously slashing down at Todd.

"Clang!" Todd jumped back and parried with the dagger in his hand.

*Peng!" As the two weapons clashed, Todd's dagger was sent flying out of his grip.

“There is even a strength buff! Three attributes! A secret technique that buffs three areas!” Todd’s mind was blank at this moment. A two attributes buff was not unheard of, but this three attributes buff of a Grand Knight level was practically unheard of, even in legends!

However, Baelin had no desire to explain things to him.

He charged forward and swung his sword at Todd’s neck.

Pu! The head that carried a scarred face was sent flying, as a blood fountain gushed to a metre’s height from the neck.

“Jenny, are you alright?!”

Baelin dispelled the translucent armour and rushed to Jenny’s side.

“I... I’m alright!” Jenny replied involuntarily, before seeing Baelin collapse at her side.

Although the Cross Star was a technique taught to him by Leylin, who was not a Grand Knight, the might of it exceeded that of other Grand Knight techniques, but still retained the same properties of a Grand Knight technique!

As for Baelin, who had activated this technique, he entered a feeble state. Even raising an arm was too difficult for him; only his eyes and mouth could just barely move.

“You... why are you this silly? This does not even concern you...” Jenny wept, and tears once again streamed down her face.

“Keke...I’m fine!” Baelin tried his best to mask his current weakened state, but it was all done in vain.

“I’ve thought about it—let’s seek asylum from Lord Leylin! He will definitely be able to protect you!” Baelin spoke what’s on his mind.

“... We can’t do that!” Jenny wryly smiled and replied.

“Baelin! Can’t you discern the truth from this misfortune? Lord Leylin has already abandoned me!” Jenny smiled bitterly, “You had better return to Lord Leylin, where he can protect you! Lucas won’t be able to cause you any harm...”

“No!” Baelin’s face flushed red. “I won’t leave you even if I die!”

“Baelin!” Jenny crouched down as both of them engaged in a passionate kiss.

After the long and intense tongue fight, Baelin seemed to have changed immediately. “Let us go! To the middle region! To where the dark elves’ kingdoms are! To the area of darkness! Whatever it is, let us leave here to a place where no one can find us, and live happily ever after!”

“Alright!”

Jenny resolutely replied.

The two exchange gazes and smiled brightly.

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“Huh! It seems as though Baelin has decided to leave!”

Leylin ruminated in amusement as he saw the extremely tidy and neat room, in which a letter lay on the table.

To him, Baelin was only a pet that he was raising while nursing his injury.

As for the current Leylin, he had already returned to the right path, and no longer had time to take care of Baelin. Perhaps it was the best choice to allow him to leave.

Furthermore, Leylin did not have much use for Baelin. Even if he was turned into a Branded Swordsman, the strength of a rank 1 Magus was not sufficient to aid Leylin.

“However, this is my first time having good intentions! I hope you can pass down my cross blade technique throughout the Twilight Zone and not ruin the name of my Farlier family...”

A profound light flashed in Leylin’s eyes.

Through the sense of the Sacred Flame he had, he already knew that Baelin and Jenny were not regular folks. What’s more, they would be taking the stage in Twilight Zone as the ‘main characters’!

One would expect that in the near future, they would definitely not have any sort of peaceful lives—troubles would come searching for them one after another.

“But only then are things interesting! My setup can finally be put to good use!”

Leylin smiled gently, before putting this matter at the back of his head.

Today was the day that he had set with Siegfried to meet other official Magus. Leylin had been anticipating this day for quite a while.

“So it’s here?”

Leylin and Siegfried, dressed in common folk clothes, walked into an extremely lavish shop.

“Gersi’s Chamber of Commerce, the most outstanding conclave in the whole of the eastern Twilight Zone. Some of the nobility even know that there is a Magi organisation supporting this conclave from the shadows...”

Siegfried smiled as he explained this to Leylin.

Although they spoke as if no one was beside them, their voices did not travel far enough for the people in the surroundings to hear.

“As for us, the other Magi who are in small associations or are wandering around, we like to gather here for a couple of days and exchange some valuable insights gleaned from recent experiments or the experience gained from meditation techniques. Sometimes trades will be conducted too. Of course, all these are only restricted to the official Magus level.”

Siegfried wore a large black glove, hiding his metal prosthetic limb within it.

“Welcome! How may I help you?”

Two beautiful maidservants came over and asked after Siegfried stepped into Gersi’s Chamber of Commerce.

“Take me to the VIP room!” Siegfried handed a gold card to the maidservant, whose eyes immediately started to shine.

“My two Lords, please follow me!” She bowed deeply, showing off the curves of her chest. As she led the way, she exaggeratedly swayed her hips.

“How is it? Do you want to play for a while?” Siegfried asked Leylin with a smile on his face.

“I have no such urges now, so maybe after this!” Leylin smiled indifferently and replied.

As the maidservant in front heard Leylin’s words, disappointment streaked across her face.

Although she was somewhat disappointed, the maid still quickly brought them to an extremely lavishly decorated room. “My apologies! As my level is not high enough, our manager will take over and assist you from here!”

The girl bowed again and took her leave.

“Our Magus VIP cards are different from others, so the person who is serving us next will know our requirements and will bring us to the conclave!”

Siegfried explained the process simply to Leylin.

“The membership registration is extremely simple. You need to first reach the rank of an official Magus, and then have another Magus refer you. I’ll set a referral up for you later!”

“I appreciate it!” Leylin smiled gently.

Boom! At this moment, an oil painting in the VIP room swung open, revealing a flight of stairs.

“Honoured guests, please follow me!”

An upper-class woman with the spiritual force of a level 3 acolyte appeared in the tunnel. Her skin was flawless and white like porcelain, without any traces of pores.

“Alright!” Siegfried nodded his head and allowed the lady to lead the way.

However, he spoke to Leylin without the lady hearing. “She is an

example of the high-grade goods that Gersi's Chamber of Commerce is offering. If you're interested, you can apply to purchase a few of them later. The chamber is rather generous to the newcomers' needs..."

"A slave at the level of an acolyte?" Leylin was in shock. This level of a slave was much better than the ones appearing in the Nightless City on the south coast.

Back in Nightless City, Leylin, who was a rank 1 Magus, had only managed to purchase a level 3, old geezer acolyte who was nearing the end of his life.

Evidently, even though both of them were level 3 acolytes, a charming lady would definitely command a higher price than a dying old geezer.

The passage was rather short, and after a couple minutes, they soon reached the end.

After opening the door, Leylin was brought into a great hall.

The light of multiple sun stones penetrated through the crystals in the four corners of the hall, illuminating every corner of the hall.

At this moment, Magi were seated in different circles while chatting in soft voices.

Upon their tables were several green fruits and drinks. Apart from that, many delicacies that were unknown to Leylin were placed there for the Magi's taking, yet very few bothered to taste them.

"Come! I'll bring you to see some of my friends!"

After looking around, Siegfried eyes lit up after he noticed a group of red haired Magi sitting in one of the circles, and he promptly dragged Leylin over to them.

"Here! These are the Magi from the Earth Fire Association, and they are also my friends! As for him, this is Mister Leylin, a wandering Magus who had recently come to our eastern capital..."

Siegfried made the introductions on both sides, and Leylin smiled and sent his greetings to the group of Magi.

Together with Leylin's disposition as a noble and his increased charisma due to the fact that he was a Warlock, he very soon managed to break the ice and began to mingle with them.

Chapter 317: Icy Jade Scorpion Breath

Leylin looked at the members of the Earth Fire Association

The Magi sitting here were rather few. Including Leylin and Siegfried, they only amounted to 5 people.

No matter if it was the south coast or the Twilight Zone, it was not easy to advance to an official Magus. However, once someone advanced, their status and position would undergo massive changes.

“When I had recently studied Gaia’s Might, I felt that it was very difficult to attract the earth element energy particles. It was especially so on the topic of gathering Gaia’s aura...”

At this moment, one of the red-haired Magi impatiently began to talk.

“For that, I believe an energy particle pond will help you...” Siegfried interrupted with his own opinion.

“That is not realistic! It consumes too many resources! I suggest using 3 kinds of meditation assisting runes, but then there is the problem of impurities in your spiritual force later on...”

Leylin found that these Magi of the Earth Fire Association discussed quite a bit about their experiences while training using their high-level meditation technique, Gaia’s Might.

Some of the problems discussed had been researched very thoroughly, and it helped Leylin a little bit in his cultivation and perfection of his Sacred Flame and Kemoyin’s Pupil.

The common practice in the Twilight Zone was like this: people would get together and discuss their experiences in meditation techniques, and thus hope to jointly advance.

Of course, one was delusional if they thought that just relying on these casually discussed phrases would help in the completion of Gaia’s Might. Thus, these Magi were not worried that their cultivation secrets would be leaked.

When it was Leylin's turn to share his experience, he talked about his breakthrough through a small bottleneck, which led to some reminiscing among the other Magi.

Although it had only taken him a short time to advance to a rank 2 Magus, his Kemoyin's Pupil had also advanced to the second level, which was considered a high level. Moreover, after obtaining another high-level meditation technique called Sacred Flame, under the constantly inferred data by the A.I. Chip, Leylin's understanding of meditation techniques had far surpassed the knowledge of these old geezers who had immersed themselves in meditation techniques for several hundreds of years!

"It seems that later on, one must not only bitterly cultivate by themselves but also often exchange experiences with their peers."

Just this one discussion had given Leylin new ideas for resolving the complexities and misunderstandings he had with his own meditation techniques. This was despite the fact that this discussion was only pertaining to the Gaia's Might, which was not the meditation technique Leylin practised!

Furthermore, relying on the information collected by the A.I. Chip this time, Leylin could derive a deeper understanding of his two meditation techniques.

This was only natural, as Magi followed the ancient principle of equal exchange among themselves.

Leylin paid attention to the fact that these Magi only talked about general things and the mentioning of the various means of doing something.

The genuine, concrete details could only be mutually exchanged between two Magi in a way like a business transaction, and strict confidentiality was expected between these two parties that had made the transaction.

Just now, Siegfried had sold some information related to the energy particle pond, and had got a huge remuneration.

After the public information exchange session was over, the next session

was the transactions between two people.

If one was an official Magus, then they could set up a table with items to be sold and await customers.

The atmosphere here was completely different from that of the open-air stalls and street vendors.

Magi were not very eager to strike a deal, but rather, they loved to showcase and play with their precious resources. It was a common sight to see both buyer and seller chatting and smiling; some even had wine out to toast their successful trades.

Unfortunately, although these underground resources were also very valuable, most of them held no interest for Leylin.

With the A.I. Chip's knowledge of some ancient information, he could easily identify the items on display and recognize their names and origins. It was a pity that while these resources were useful for a level 1 Magus, they were of no use to Leylin, who had already advanced to a level 2 Magus.

However, after all was said and done, the underworld was not the same as the south coast. Leylin did not recognise some of the items on display, and as a result, his curiosity was piqued.

“What is this?”

Leylin walked up to a table just ahead and picked up an item that had been placed on a white tablecloth.

It was a uniquely shaped bone flute, with one side having some irregular, round holes.

“This is the Saxon bagpipes, which was inherited from the McKinsey era's Leighton archduchy. It is said the tune it produces is very beautiful, even surpassing the songs sung by mermaids. Thus, it can be used as bait to trap mermaids. Unfortunately, ever since the Leighton archduchy's destruction, there hasn't been anyone who knows how to play this instrument...”

The seller was a middle-aged fellow who was suitably attired for this occasion. In his hand was a long-stemmed wine glass full of a dark-red wine.

“I am very interested in these kinds of ancient musical instruments. I have currently already acquired 3912 varieties of musical instruments from different eras, and have housed them in my collection room. However, this item that I’m holding right now will not be able to shine on my hands, so I am in search of a more suitable owner”

The middle-aged gentleman’s face appeared regretful as if he was saying goodbye to his own lover

“If you can use this item to play the ancient Requiem, then it is all yours.” He raised his glass of wine to toast Leylin.

“Umm! I beg your pardon, but I have only a little understanding in playing a musical instrument...”

Leylin was somewhat silent, but this was also the norm for Magi. Due to their long lifespans, apart from always doing experiments and cultivating, Magi also took some time to have some extra fun.

Preferring to hoard some special kind of collectibles was not a very common or safe hobby. Some dark Magi even experienced a big change in their temperaments, as they got addicted to collecting strange collectibles—some of which even reeked of blood—and finally caused harm to others and themselves.

“That is truly regrettable! However, one day, I will definitely be able to find its genuine owner.” This gentleman seemed to truly feel regret and sighed. “Come! Let us drink to the moment that my precious item will find its owner! Toast!”

“Cheers!” Leylin inwardly sneered, but still picked up a glass of orange juice. Then middle-aged gentleman touched his glass to Leylin’s, issuing a clear ‘ding’ sound.

There were but a few in this trading session like this strange, gentlemanly Magus. Most of the Magi were doing their exchanges quietly.

There were some who had clearly defined that their items could only be exchanged for items or resources, while the others also accepted magic crystals and completed their transactions.

In the Twilight Zone, magic crystals were also a commonly used currency among Magi.

Leylin exploited those transactions that used magic crystals to buy several resources that could only be found in the Twilight Zone, intending to go back and look over each of them thoroughly.

Because he was worried that both parties' magic crystals might have subtle differences, Leylin had purified all the magic crystals he had brought from the south coast and had converted them into magic crystals with the purest essence he could produce.

Magic crystals with this kind of purity were just like that magic crystal used by Leylin when he had opened the ancient teleportation formation. This was because after undergoing the purification process many times, it was now impossible to find any characteristics of the south coast in Leylin's magic crystals.

It was just like that matter with the gold coins. The decorative design on the gold coins from the south coast was not too similar to those from Twilight Zone, but Leylin had melted down all his gold coins into a lump of gold so that no person would be able to tell that it was from the south coast.

“Ehhh??”

While Leylin was walking around, he was occasionally observing the other Magi bargaining, trading, and so on, silently watching and learning from them. At this time, however, something on a white table caught his attention.

“What is this?”

Leylin picked up an item that looked like a shard of ice from the white table, appearing to be interested in that item.

This ice shard was preserved within a green jade box as if it was a very

valuable treasure.

However, this feature wasn't why it had caught Leylin's eye.

While he was walking to this table, he had felt a movement in his blood essence, as if it were reacting to some item, and that item was this ice shard.

At this moment, while Leylin was holding onto the ice shard with both his hands, the sensation he had felt before had now intensified.

Zi! Zi! A white mist appeared out from that ice shard and very quickly condensed into a layer of thick frost that froze Leylin's fingers.

This degree of white frost could not do any harm to Leylin, but he still was pleasantly surprised to find that when this cold air invaded him, there was an odd change that had occurred to the Kemoyin's bloodline in his body.

This feeling, it is as if a person who was burning with rage suddenly had ice-cold water poured on him. It really is very enjoyable!

Leylin heaved a mental sigh.

A Warlock's emotional instability was a bloodline illness, and it had already caused Leylin trouble for a long time. Although the A.I. Chip, in accordance with the research notes and the original prescription of the tranquility potion left behind by the Great Magus Serholm, had allocated more of the high-level tranquility potion, in the end, it could only suppress the illness, and could not completely cure it.

Now, this ice shard-like item in his hand caused him to feel some hope!

"I feel that this item I am holding can suppress the negative effects on my emotions for at least a year! If I find more items like these, then perhaps the emotional instabilities can be completely cured."

A joyous sparkle appeared in Leylin's eyes, but it was quickly concealed.

He did not want to expose any emotion before he got his hands on the name and origin of the ice-shard.

"This is the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath. Icy Jade Scorpions live deep

within ice caves, and their saliva has the effect of boosting the advancement of plenty of ice element high-level meditation techniques. It is being sold for 500,000 magic crystals, or can be exchanged for an item of similar worth...”

In front of Leylin was an extremely beautiful female Magus.

Her long purple robes could not hide the curves of the body. Instead, it was even more enchanting as the robes failed to conceal them. Her light purple hair was let down like a waterfall, and her exquisite face carried a smile.

This woman’s looks definitely ranked in the top ten of all females Leylin had ever seen, and in addition, she looked extremely intelligent and capable.

“I have an experiment which requires a large amount of this item; can you bring me to the ice cave? Or perhaps, I can purchase them in bulk”

From the smile of the woman, Leylin knew that she had seen through his urgent need for the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath, so he just calmly admitted it.

Chapter 318: Research And Experiment

Meanwhile, a magic crystal was tossed onto the table.

Leylin kept the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath in his palm with no intentions of returning it.

"Is it just an experiment?"

The purple-haired Magus said with a grin. The magic crystal on the table flew into her hands, leaving behind a flickering black afterimage.

Leylin merely looked at her with a vacant stare, as if what he had said was the truth.

"Alright then!" The female Magus elegantly raised her finger, on which her fingernail had been painted with the red sap of a daffodil, and kept the magic crystal.

"I'm Celine! You can contact me in the future for more information regarding the Icy Jade Scorpion. This is my secret imprint!"

She then passed her secret imprint, which looked like a purple daffodil, to Leylin.

Leylin nodded and left the area, and right after that, a plump Magus walked up to Celine and began to chat with her earnestly.

"Leylin, my friend! Where are you going?"

At this moment, Siegfried strolled up to where he was.

"You came at the right time. Do you know who that purple haired female Magus is?" Leylin pointed at the female Magus who occasionally covered her mouth and giggled while conversing animatedly with the plump Magus.

"Oh! That's Celine, the inheritor of a small guild. Although the guild's strength isn't much, she is a famous beauty of the eastern capital! However, she's extremely crafty, and many Magi who have harboured designs on her have suffered. She's not someone you'd want to provoke..."

Siegfried looked at Leylin before grinning. "Why? Are you interested in

her?”

“No! We just had some dealings previously.”

After listening to Siegfried’s explanation, he was even more sure that Celine was not a simple woman. The grip he had on the box unconsciously tightened.

However, the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath was paramount to his path as a Warlock, so he absolutely could not miss this chance.

“It seems like I’ll have to play with this vixen for a while!”

Leylin smiled as he glanced at Celine.

.....

In the eastern capital, within the villa that Leylin bought.

After Baelin’s silent farewell, only Leylin was left as the sole occupant of the grand villa. As Leylin had not bought any slaves, it felt rather empty in here.

At this moment, Leylin had separately constructed a concealed tunnel in the underground cellar.

At the end of the tunnel was a spacious underground lab, at the centre of which was a silver metal experimental desk with test-tubes lying on top of it. All of these things were items that Leylin had brought along with him.

“What a strange item!”

At this moment, Leylin used silver tweezers and held the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath as blue light shined in his eyes.

With the aid of the microscopic analysing abilities of the A.I. Chip, the surface on the icy shard continuously enlarged, finally revealing a strange rune with six sides.

Chilliness churned and emanated from this strange rune.

[Beep! The analysis of the components of the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath is complete! Creating matrixes and images! Beginning simulation of the experiments on bloodline!]

Soon, the A.I. Chip's voice intoned.

"Let's begin!" Leylin inhaled deeply.

[Authorisation received. Beginning the simulation of experiment on bloodline!] The A.I. Chip worked on the data. Leylin's eyes blurred as he seemed to enter a different dimension. He could vaguely make out a translucent human figure with purple blood running through their veins.

[Injecting the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath!] With the A.I. Chip's voice, two thin metal needles pierced the humanoid figure at the shoulders, and images then showed a strange white liquid flowing into the body.

Huala! Once the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath had entered the body, it frothed as if hot oil had met with icy water, creating a very strong reaction.

The experimented-on body began to shake violently, and the numbers which represented the data of the figure changed wildly, almost turning into a blur.

[Blood flow and pressure are increased, and burden on the body is multiplied by five!]

From time to time, the A.I. Chip would update and interpret the new figures for Leylin.

"Begin the radiation of energy particles! Stabilise the vitality within!" Leylin ordered once again.

Soon, black Dark elemental energy particles began to emanate from the experimental body, and under such radiation, the body slowly began to stabilise.

Finally, the experimental body returned to its original state, and the purple blood in the body continued to flow, just like wine inside a glass.

The main difference was that the blood had dulled a little and become darker.

[Warlock's bloodline emotional stability experiment was successful! Estimated time for suppressing the core emotional waves: 345 days, 13 hours.] The A.I Chip gave an accurate analysis of the experiment.

“If the dosage is increased, could it prevent any troubles in the future?” Leylin asked the A.I. Chip.

[Data is insufficient. Analysing the data’s probabilities...] The A.I. Chip once again went into a computing mode.

Only after five hours had passed did the A.I. Chip come up with a reply. [Success rate is 67%. Requires more high-level Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath.]

“As expected! This kind of Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath can really cure problems with Warlocks’ emotions.”

Leylin’s eyes shone brightly with happiness.

Although the ancient bloodline Warlocks had powerful physiques and magic capabilities, it was very difficult for them to advance.

However, this was not the main reason why the Warlock inheritance declined!

As a result of their access to powerful ancient bloodlines, a Warlock would also inherit the intact genes—which were deeply imbued with tyrannical and terrifying emotions—of ancient predators.

Because of this, a Warlock’s personality was often irascible, and they were quick-tempered, which was a fatal flaw in the Magus world.

No matter how powerful one was, what was the point in having such power if one could not control their own spirit?

Therefore, the calm and rational Magi could pass on their legacies. However, there were no traces of Warlocks on the south coast and Twilight Zone; perhaps only the central continent had some of the legacies left behind by Warlocks.

“Icy Jade Scorpion!”

Leylin quickly sorted out all the information he had related to this organism.

After being told the name of this crystal, Leylin began an intensive study on the characteristics, habitats, capabilities, etc. of this organism, and gathered all of the relevant data.

“Icy Jade Scorpion, a high energy organism that reaches the might of a rank 1 Magus in its adult stages. In search of fertile lands, they often reside in icy caves! Legend has it that they came from another world back in ancient times, and after entering the Twilight Zone, they underwent some evolutionary changes. Only the special radiation reflected from certain types of topaz are able to sustain their lives and reproduction capabilities. Their crystallised breath is known to have stimulating effects on certain high-grade meditation techniques.”

This was a brief summary of all the information Leylin had gathered.

The icy cave’s resources had already been monopolised by several guilds, and was in the process of being excavated. It would be extremely difficult for Leylin to enter on his own.

“No matter what, I have to obtain the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath!”
Flames of desire glinted in Leylin’s eyes, “Even if the heavens fall and the earth crumbles, I will not stop under any circumstances!”

Suppressing a bloodline Warlock’s emotional instability proved to be extremely difficult, as even though there were so many ancient Magi, they could only discover ways to suppress it. If not for Leylin having the A.I. Chip and bloodline acting as a reminder, he definitely would not have been able to discover the use of the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath this easily.

Leylin did not feel that he would chance upon such a lucky encounter again!

“However, using the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath as a suppressant may not work for all Warlocks, and may not even work for others with the Giant Kemoyin Serpent’s bloodline. However, the A.I. Chip managed to find a resource that is able to work specifically for me!”

Leylin’s face was extremely solemn.

There were no remedies to treat the emotional instability of Warlocks. Also, due to the difference in bloodlines, each Warlock had a unique bodily attribute. Hence, Leylin himself was not sure whether the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath would be effective.

It was very likely that the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath would aid Leylin, but not another Warlock with the Giant Kemoyin Serpent's bloodline.

In other words, the unique characteristics of this resource made it especially effective for Leylin!

Furthermore, the rise and fall of other Warlocks was of no concern to Leylin! He only cared that the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath was useful to him, and that he needed more of it. It would be best if he could find another Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath of higher quality.

"I'll have to plan for this! I need a calm and collected mind!"

Leylin looked at the icy shard between the tweezers.

"Through the experimentation on the A.I. Chip, I now know that although the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath can suppress my mental fluctuations and allow me to be sane for close to a year, there will also be some side effects. I have to concoct some potions to get rid of these side effects!"

This would not stump Leylin at all. After residing in Four Seasons Garden for such a long time, Leylin was no longer a Potion Master who had just advanced.

The Four Seasons Garden was a large-scaled power that was formed of potion masters. They had various information on all sorts of potions, as well as ideas on concocting ancient potions, and these experiments were not too difficult.

Naturally, Leylin had absorbed all of the information stored within the Four Seasons Garden like a sponge, all while practising his potioneering skills at the same time.

Through various trades and experiments, Leylin estimated that his skills had far surpassed that of his mentor, Professor Kroft, after leaving the Four Seasons Garden, and had even reached the realm of a Potion Grandmaster!

A Potions Grandmaster! Their success rate for brewing high-grade potions was around 30%, and they could even research and try brewing

new types of potions on their own!

Chapter 319: Negotiations

There were only a few Potion Masters in the entire south coast, and they were all pursued and worshipped by many major powers.

Hence, Leylin did not dare to expose his attainment in potioneering.

Advancing to rank 2 at his age was already heaven-defying, but if he revealed his skill in potioneering, he would be called not a normal genius, but a freak of nature!

A Potion Master's progress was not dependent on his theory research—he had to do a great amount of practical work. Only after wasting lots of resources could he get plenty of experience and thus make progress.

Even if Leylin was freakishly talented, he simply could not be promoted to a higher level in potioneering without doing anything.

If many Magi decided to investigate him, the existence of his A.I. Chip might even be exposed!

Because of this, Leylin had always concealed his genuine realm in Potions, choosing to stay silent regarding this.

The most important aspect of a Potions Master was innovation! By relying on their wealth of knowledge and experience, they could improvise formulas and still attain a very high success rate.

Thanks to Leylin's current attainments in potioneering, he only had to think for a short while before being able to recall several formulas to be used together with Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath that would negate its side effects.

“En! In order to completely eliminate the side-effects of the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath, I'll need Arrow Frog Venom, Reddish Stony Feces, and the egg of the Black Mountain Goat, and then I'll be able to start the neutralisation process...”

Leylin eventually selected a formula. “Coincidentally, I have one portion of all of these items!”

Soon after, he was deeply immersed in the brewing process.

The usage of this Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath concerned the success or failure of eliminating the side effects from his bloodline, and thus, he had to be serious.

.....

Two days passed before Leylin emerged from his laboratory.

There were slight differences between his condition from 2 days ago and now. His personality had become colder, and he now gave off an unapproachable aura. His skin had turned softer, and it constantly emitted a jade-like luster.

A chilliness seemed to emit from his black hair, decreasing the surrounding temperature by a few degrees.

After having brewed the potion, Leylin was itching to make use of it and see if it would successfully suppress his bloodline.

The A.I. Chip had already given Leylin definite assurance that while the potion was in effect, even if Leylin was to take part in bloody battles every day, the effects of his bloodline wouldn't corrupt his rational thinking.

Only now did Leylin have the confidence to research on the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath.

"Siegfried! Previously, I asked you to get some intelligence about Celine's guild. Is there any news on that matter?"

"Celine! I now have some time, so tell me where it is! We can go there directly and talk in person about the matter concerning the Icy Jade Scorpion!"

The first thing Leylin did was send out two short messages using secret imprints.

A few minutes later, he received an answer. A khaki coloured imprint of a mechanical arm shone upon the contact book.

"I had previously gathered some intelligence, and coupled with your generous reward, I have already gotten a better understanding of Nature's

Alliance. I'll pass on the information to you later.”

Siegfried conveyed some good news to Leylin.

“Thank you! I will come and visit you later.” Leylin smiled.

Compared to Siegfried, Celine's answer was much simpler. There was a time and a place, and everything else could only be discussed once they reached the place.

“What a shrewd woman!” Leylin evaluated. “I just hope you don't go and get yourself ensnared too!”

.....

“This is the place.” Leylin had arrived in front of an elegant office in the eastern capital.

This building was rather different from the usual structures of the subterranean world, which placed an emphasis on defence. Here, it was extremely majestic and sought to be elegant and pleasing to the eye—it was adorned with all sorts of flowers and plants, while its defence was unbelievably weak.

This contrasting style, along with the top-class luxurious items inside, had attracted the attention of several aristocrats, causing them to rush madly towards this place. However, it implemented a very strict system for its members, and only a limited number of customers were received. The supporter of this place was also extremely firm, and after rejecting the requests of a few aristocratic families, the demand sharply dropped.

Leylin entered this office and began to recall the information Siegfried had given him.

Nature's Alliance—this was the guild that Celine was in. It was said that this small sized guild had affinities with various plants from another world, and their greenhouse handling of plants and research of these plants were extremely unique and cutting edge.

Furthermore, although the high-grade meditation technique of the Nature Alliance did not have strong fighting abilities, it was extremely

useful in playing the role of support. Furthermore, the training in this technique allowed the practitioner to permanently change their appearance slightly, turning them into handsome men and pretty ladies that would be able to attract pursuit from the opposite sex.

Lastly, the Magi that graduated from these guilds were completely different from traditional Magi with their stubbornness and unwillingness to communicate with others. Most of them were intelligent, capable, and extremely adept at socialising. They had quite a good reputation outside, and even had a good relationship with other small guilds.

This was all the information Siegfried had gathered regarding the guild behind Celine.

Leylin had also found much valuable information from within. “Changing their appearance, being good at socialising, having a powerful backing... It looks like the high-grade meditation technique of Nature’s Alliance can’t directly increase one’s strength. It might increase one’s charisma or illusory abilities!”

“In addition, they have a good relationship with most small guilds, and a few medium-sized guilds. This means that it’s almost impossible for there to be a rank 2 or higher Magus in charge, else it would have long since become a large-scale guild.”

If Leylin was still a rank 2 Warlock, he would naturally force his way through. However, as he was still sustaining an injury and could not yet use his full power, he had to remain low-key indefinitely and not attract unwarranted attention from Magi who were rank 2 and above. Hence, he had to be patient and enter the game that this wily vixen Celine was playing.

“Hello, Mister! Do you have an appointment?”

As Leylin stepped in, he was respectfully stopped by two maidservants. As they greeted him, Leylin caught a whiff of an extremely simple yet elegant perfume. The two maidservants were dressed extremely well, and they clearly had training in their poise, which could rival that of women in nobility.

However, the few Knights that stood behind the maidservants were enough to cause people to dispel their stray thoughts.

“I have an appointment with Celine!” Leylin answered.

“Lord Leylin, please follow me!” After hearing Celine’s name, the two maidservants’ bodies shuddered slightly and they became more respectful to Leylin.

“Lord Celine is waiting for you in the Horizon Pavilion!”

“Horizon Pavilion? Isn’t that the guestroom that is reserved for people of the highest importance?” A passing noble youth squealed, attracting the attention of passers-by.

“I haven’t heard wrongly, it is the Horizon Pavilion!”

“Exactly what background does this young man have? I haven’t heard anything about a noble paying a visit...”

From a secret hall nearby, all sorts of mutters could be heard. Though their voices were extremely low and quiet, they were still able to travel into Leylin’s ear.

Leylin followed behind the maidservants. Under everyone’s astonished gazes, he headed towards the meeting point designated for the people of highest importance.

After walking through several corridors that were lined with flowers and plants, Leylin finally reached the Horizon Pavilion.

The two maidservants opened the door for Leylin before retreating.

Mist! A layer of thin white mist engulfed the entire room, and in certain corners of the room were the glittering of jewels, making the place more magnificent than before, its picturesque beauty like a place of fantasy.

“En? This mist seems to have a type of tranquil and relaxing effect, which is rather useful for even a regular human’s body!”

Leylin made his deduction after catching a single whiff of it. He even understood the formula to replicate the mist. “It’s a pity that it doesn’t have much of an effect on an official Magus.”

Leylin continued to observe the layout of the Horizon Pavilion.

Green plants took up a huge portion of the room, but the layout was extremely neat and tidy, giving off a feeling of being one with nature.

In the Twilight Zone, green plants were extremely valuable resources, as the light from sun stones was used to grow various fungi and oats. As for vegetables and fruits, they were extremely rare items only for the nobility, much less plants that were only used for aesthetic viewing purposes.

Celine rested on a chair made of vines, seemingly unaware of Leylin's arrival. Her long, slender legs were revealed, and with that beauty of hers that could cause wars between kingdoms, it was no small temptation, even for an official Magus.

"Ahem." Leylin lightly coughed.

Following which, the woman lying down was roused in shock, and she proceeded to greet Leylin with a smile, "You're here, Magus Leylin!"

Each and every movement of hers had elegance in it, and coupled with her voice that was as sweet as a skylark's, it could leave one intoxicated.

"Hello, Magus Celine!" Leylin gave a perfunctory greeting, the expression on his face neither warm nor cold.

The spiritual force of an official Magus was enough to engulf the space within the room, and when Leylin entered, he did not conceal the aura on his body. It would be strange if this woman did not realise his arrival at all!

However, even if it was done on purpose, Celine's behaviour could not invoke any hatred. It was as if a little girl was playing a prank, which was not annoying.

However, after witnessing this scene, Leylin was even more sure of the meditation technique she cultivated in.

A superior illusory technique was not only cast on opponents, but also on the user. It would often leave opposing Magi finding it unbearable to inflict pain on them.

It was extremely obvious that Celine's meditation technique had

reached such a level.

Chapter 320: Celine

“There is only one effect from such a meditation technique, and that is to increase affinity with others!”

“Natural affinity! Affinity to all things! At its peak, it will even affect intelligent creatures and their unconscious state of mind. Furthermore, it will also attract the illusion elemental energy particles...”

Leylin quickly deduced Celine’s meditation technique.

“Terrifying! At its later stages, this meditation technique will even affect official Magi, where the energy particles will enter the Magus’ body and influence their spirit’s natural inclinations...”

Of course, Celine’s attainment in this meditation technique had not reached such a level yet. Furthermore, Leylin had only conjectured the level higher than her current state, which may not even be true.

Evidently, her lustrous appearance could still not enchant Leylin.

Hence, Leylin had not completely disregarded Celine’s beauty and found another chair made of vines, which was facing her, to sit on. “I’m sure that Miss Celine is extremely clear about my intentions on being here...”

The attitude that Leylin showed caused Celine to furrow her brows. However, very soon she smiled meaningfully as she stood up and stretched her back.

“Since Mister Leylin had already mentioned it, then I won’t beat around the bush any longer!” Celine smiled wryly. “The icy cave is not controlled by my guild, Nature’s Alliance. As for the Icy Jade Scorpion, it’s venom poses a problem even for Magi... Furthermore, the elite Icy Jade Scorpion has the might of a semi-converted elemental Magus. Legends have it that a peak rank 1 Magus could not even beat their king...”

“Under so many unfavourable circumstances, we have to pay a huge price for every Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath that we obtain. What’s more troublesome is that this species cannot be tamed, and they will attack any other living thing... To be frank, that material that I put for sale was the

very last piece I owned...”

Celine continuously poured forth her grievances, seemingly pitiful like a weak and helpless damsel. One would often forget her identity as an official Magus.

However, Leylin would not fall into such a trap. Furthermore, even if she really had met with such troubles, Leylin had no intentions of helping her.

“My apologies but my reason for coming here this time is to amass large amounts of the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath. Also, if you were to meet with difficulties, we could change our negotiations. Bring me the permit to enter the icy cave and a detailed map. In exchange, I’m willing to fork out large amounts of magic crystals, precious resources, and even top-grade research materials.

Leylin spoke in a rich and overbearing manner.

Of course, to enter the icy cave, he could deal with other organisations or simply choose to infiltrate his way in.

However, having an honest identity was always a good thing. Furthermore, Leylin had already inquired about the other factions who were safeguarding the icy cave. They were either a type of intelligent species or those extremely obstinate, conservative humans. As to whether Leylin could obtain anything from them, it remained a mystery.

No matter what, if Leylin did not want to cause a huge stir, the best way was to get in through Nature’s Alliance.

Of course, if he was left with no other choices, Leylin did not mind going into seclusion for a good while before he regained the might of a rank 2 Warlock and force his way in and even monopolise the area for himself.

“Entry permit? Even a map?” Celine bowed her head as she pondered, but she very soon declined, “My apologies! Mister Leylin, you aren’t from Nature’s Alliance, so if I were to let you in, the other factions would not be too pleased about it...”

“However, if you were a member of Nature’s Alliance, then there wouldn’t be any problems anymore!” Celine grinned.

Leylin laughed loudly, “Just for a mere entry permit and you want me to join as a member, aren’t you a little too naive?”

“It definitely will not stop at that level. If you, Mister Leylin, are willing to join, Celine is willing to give you the honorary title of a professor, with 500,000 magic crystals as a salary each year. Furthermore, the precious resources and experiment lab will be opened to you! Mister! Won’t you give Celine a hand?”

Celine sounded extremely sincere as she spoke in an endearing manner which could enchant people. Ripples seemed to emanate from her big, shiny eyes.

“En?” Leylin was shocked for a while before he smiled and met Celine’s eyes with his.

Under the detection of the A.I. Chip, an extremely indiscernible spiritual force was revealed to him. Moreover, the direction that it headed towards was Leylin’s brain and his sea of consciousness.

“She actually dared to cast an illusion on me?” Leylin did not know whether to laugh or cry. This woman was acting somewhat recklessly. Not to mention the automatic counterattack from his bloodline, as a rank 2 Warlock, his massive spiritual force was enough to cause Celine a backlash which could turn her into an idiot!

However, he still had uses for her, so naturally, he would not be this vicious.

From Leylin’s eyes, a large crimson coloured light surged forward and crumbled the incoming spiritual force into pieces.

After realising this had happened, Celine’s face turned pale. Leylin, who had adopted a low profile, had always been suppressing his spiritual force and energy waves that he radiated. On the surface, he was just another ordinary rank 1 Magus.

For this very reason, Celine was willing to cast an illusion on him.

However, from the looks of it, this Magus by the name of Leylin was concealing most of his strength, which had caused her to be on the losing

end.

In many cases, magic could turn around and backfire on the person who had cast the spell and cause him or her damage.

Celine struggled, wanting to shift her eyes away.

However, her neck seemed to be stuck in a certain position, unable to move even an inch.

Shocked, Celine could only gaze pitifully at Leylin, hoping to gain his understanding.

After playing around with her for a while, Leylin gave a faint smile and curbed the crimson rays coming from his eyes. Meanwhile, Celine trembled violently, two red lines flowed from her beautiful nose and created a flaw on her attractive face.

“A peak rank 1 Magus! You’re a peak rank 1 Magus!” Celine did not even bother sorting out her appearance and exclaimed.

Through this spiritual force encounter, Celine could tell that he had a spiritual force that was as deep and profound as an ocean. The icy and terrifying aura it had caused her much fear.

She was extremely confident in her abilities in casting illusions. Based on records on meditation techniques, only someone who had the strength of at least a rank 1 peak Magus would be able to forcefully break her illusions.

At this point, Magi like them had basically completely converted their elemental essence, and their whole body had undergone a slight change. Ordinary illusions were basically useless.

And Leylin right here was a peak rank 1 Magus!

“My apologies! Celine did have the slightest clue that Mister Leylin had already been promoted to the peak of rank 1. Please forgive me for that sudden probing just now. Thank you so much for letting me off.”

Celine looked grim, got up, and bowed towards Leylin with an expression of reverence.

In this situation where guilds were usually managed by official Magi, a peak rank 1 Magus was enough to destroy several small guilds. Celine was extremely familiar with the destructive power of a peak rank 1 Magus.

Magi at this level were enough to be the trump cards of medium-scaled guilds. Why would they appear here?

While Celine was bowing, she secretly raised her head and took the measure of this young man who was preposterously good looking. All sorts of thoughts emerged in her mind.

“It’s nothing much! How is it going regarding the trade?” Leylin shook his head slightly.

Just showing a bit of strength was enough for this little vixen to see the disparity between them. When the difference in power was like that between heaven and earth, any scheming would be useless!

“The trade isn’t very urgent. Please wait for a while longer!”

Celine’s attitude had now undergone an 180-degree change. She bowed slightly, and then flitted away into the darkness like a butterfly.

She did not make him wait long, appearing in front of him again within a few minutes.

However, she now wore a purplish-gold gown and had dressed herself up, and did not look as pitiful as she had been. She was also holding onto a round disk.

“This is the collection at our office. There aren’t many produced every year, and we only use it to entertain important guests!”

Celine smiled daintily, placing the item on the round dish on the table.

It was a seed that was in the shape of an olive. There were also patterns that were similar to that on walnuts and was probably the seed of some plant.

Celine’s pale jade-like hands brushed at the seed!

Weng! Along with a circle of green rays, the entire seed began to tremble.

Pak! A white feeler burst out of the seed, extended itself, and then increased in number.

After the feelers were brown branches, followed by green leaves and pink flowers.

Under the green rays, this seed rapidly went through its entire brief life, and when all the flower petals fell away, a red fruit that was like an apple appeared on a branch.

“This is a special local product of ours, the Sicily Fruit! As it stays ripe for just a short period of time, it needs to be eaten right after being picked to be able to enjoy its pure, unadulterated taste.”

Celine explained to Leylin while giving a gentle smile.

“The miracles in life are truly splendid and numerous!” Leylin praised. Such a miracle was only possible by using magic.

He picked the fruit off the plant, and the plant, which had lost its fruit, quickly wilted, and in seconds, turned into a puddle of grey liquid.

Chapter 321: A Pact

Munch!

Leylin took a bite of the fruit that had been created by using magic to accelerate its growth.

As for any poisons, after having awakened the toxic innate talent of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent, he was basically immune to most poisons in the world. Perhaps only the terrifying toxins that originated from ancient times might be able to affect him.

As the fruit entered his mouth, a fragrant and sweet juice flowed between his teeth.

“It tastes pretty good, and it also seems to be beneficial towards one’s spiritual force! It is still rather effective for official Magi who are gathering spiritual force.”

Leylin gave a slightly surprised glance towards Celine.

“The Sicily fruit is only effective for official Magi who are eating it for the first time. If a Magus’ rank is too high, or if it is eaten multiple times, it is probably only useful for satisfying one’s taste buds and stomach.”

Celine could only force a wry smile, pointing out the flaws in the fruit.

“Even so, it is still remarkable!” Leylin shook his head. The effects of this fruit were akin to those of a potion for spiritual force. If this was on the south coast, countless official Magi would be looting this everywhere. Here, however, any small power was able to bring it out, and Leylin once again learned more about the abundance of resources in the subterranean world.

After displaying his strength, Leylin was extremely calm and composed, enjoying the top-grade delicacies, wine, and other great things that Celine brought out, while occasionally speaking to her.

After that, Celine took the initiative and brought up the trade that Leylin had been talking about.

“Is my lord really not going to even consider Celine’s suggestion?”

Celine stared at Leylin with puppy-dog eyes.

“I don’t have any plans to join any powers and be tied down.” Leylin rejected her straight out.

“Please don’t worry about that at all. Nature’s Alliance is very small and I, Celine, am the only official Magus. My lord, you wouldn’t have to do much!” Celine guaranteed.

“Also, the moment you enter, we will release to you all of Nature’s Alliance’s high-grade meditation techniques and information regarding the secret spells that have been passed down.

After all, it was very rare for a peak rank 1 Magus to be seen traveling alone in the Twilight Zone. One could go so far as to say that they could be seen once in a hundred years.

If one wanted to walk far on the path of Magi, it was essential that they possess large amounts of resources and knowledge, and these were things that only large powers possessed.

Hence, those wandering Magi were usually not that powerful. Anyone who was a semi-converted Magus was considered rather powerful, and as for being a peak rank 1 Magus, that was virtually impossible.

Even if there were one or two who were extremely lucky, they would immediately be roped in by large Magi organisations, and would definitely not continue to wander.

Now, however, Celine knew there was a tremendous opportunity in front of her!

The moment she recruited Leylin, Nature’s Alliance would automatically become a medium-ranked guild that would not lose out to top powers!

Hence, whilst knowing that she did not have much hope in this endeavour, Celine still wanted to give it a try! Though she had previously used her own beauty to seduce a few Magi, most of them were nothing special, and all they wanted was to gain possession of her. It was extremely disgusting, but she had to endure the disgust that rose within her and continue to have dealings with them for her guild to continue to

exist.

If her guild had a peak rank 1 Magus taking charge, things would definitely be different!

“My apologies but...” Leylin spoke, causing Celine’s expression to pale.

“But it’s not as if there isn’t a roundabout way of doing this.” However, Leylin’s next words caused Celine’s eyes to shine.

“I can go through the motions of entering the Nature’s Alliance guild to obtain the entry permit to enter the icy cave. Also, I want everything that you promised me, and in return, I can even personally help you to expand the guild to some extent! After this, you and your Nature’s Alliance are not allowed to reject any of my requests. Remember, I mean any at all!”

Leylin altered the conditions a little, leaving Celine to sink deeply into thought.

“Fine!” After muttering to herself for some time, this clever woman quickly nodded and accepted Leylin’s terms.

There were few chances to recruit a peak rank 1 Magus. In addition, though Leylin would only enter the guild in name, as long as she did her utmost if Nature’s Alliance were to get into trouble, wouldn’t he help out?”

“I can.. Even...” Celine raised her head and looked at Leylin’s handsome features, flushed red, and then ducked her head.

However, considering her experience, she knew to reign in her emotions.

“I’ll pass you the high-grade meditation techniques and information regarding spells as soon as possible. May I know when you are planning to enter the icy cave? I can arrange...”

Celine’s head automatically lowered.

Such an attitude surprised Leylin. “Don’t I have to sign some contract? I recall that when most guilds recruit new blood, some even get them to leave behind a portion of their soul.”

“I trust Lord Leylin!” Celine resolutely stated, which left Leylin somewhat

stupefied.

Of course, he would not leave any traces of his spirit to be bound by a contract. However, he was prepared to use the Trial's Eye to reassure her. After all, he still had many items that could be used to concoct the solution of the Nefarious Filthbird's feathers.

However, it seemed like Celine was slyer than he thought, and was also willing to take risks!

Perhaps, in the future, Nature's Alliance would be able to shine through her leadership and walk the path to glory!

Leylin looked at Celine, who seemed like a maidservant now, as he smiled in a toying manner...

.....

A few days later, on a tall, fertile land, in front of a mighty construction.

Celine wore purple robes, seemingly with a bewitching intent. This caused the two acolytes behind her to gulp down their saliva.

Between the two acolytes, one of them was female. She herself was intoxicated by Celine's beauty, and her gaze held a trace of adoration.

"Lord Celine, are we really waiting for a peak rank 1 Magus here?"

As for the other male acolyte, he was somewhat in disbelief. It was a peak rank 1 Magus after all! Such strength was enough to be granted the position of an elder in large guilds. Why would such a Magus lower his status and enter a small guild?

Or perhaps, maybe it was for Lord Celine! The male acolyte racked his brains to derive a plausible explanation while tightly clenching his fist.

As for the female acolyte, she gritted her teeth.

As for what she thought, that peak rank 1 Magus must have used some methods to cause Lord Celine to succumb to him, and intentionally joined the guild to use it to his advantage for a long time.

"Obo, Ilya, although this Lord Leylin has a relatively good-natured

disposition, you cannot be disrespectful. You are the hope of my Nature's Alliance. If you have the chance to be favoured by Lord Leylin and become his disciple, the chances of advancing to a rank 1 Magus in the future will be extremely high..."

As for Celine, she did not consider the complicated feelings of her acolytes and even tried to instruct them at this moment.

The reason for her bringing the two acolytes who had the highest chances of advancing into an official Magus with her was twofold. First, she wanted everyone in the guild to know that she had recruited a peak rank 1 Magus, and on the other hand, she had hoped for Leylin to take them as his disciples, to further strengthen the ties they had.

"Jejeje! Isn't that the guild leader of Nature's Alliance? Who might be this important for the ravishing beauty Miss Celine to personally welcome him?"

At this moment, a group of Magi walked out as the large gates of the construction creaked open.

The one walking at the forefront was middle-aged, with a half-naked torso and eight long legs that propped up his body. At his buttocks was a sack of silk.

It seemed to be a half-man half-spider creature. Moreover, a genital tube hung from his lower abdomen in the open. Looking at it, Obo felt it repulsive, and as for Ilya, she lowered her head.

However, they could not express their disgust, as this creature had the might of a semi-converted rank 1 Magus, which made it stronger than Celine.

Through the sensing of the spiritual force, they could see that the halo of energy particles surrounding the creature's body was mightier than that of their guild leader.

"It's been a really long time, Magus Skrill!" Celine smiled jubilantly and went forward to greet the creature.

The Magus Skrill looked at Obo and Ilya in disdain, before looking at

Celine. “Miss Celine, why do you have to safeguard the Nature’s Alliance? There are so few acolytes, and much less potential. This will only end with you squandering your youth and your precious life span. Why don’t you join us at the Eight-Claw Spider Guild? I can give you a position which is just beneath mine...”

Skrill licked his lips as he lustfully looked at Celine.

“My apologies, Sir Skrill, I...” Celine smiled with some difficulty, and as Skrill edged closer, she caught a whiff of his repulsive odour, which left her rather pale.

On the other side, Obo and Ilya’s eyes had already turned red; if not for Skrill being an official Magus with a might that surpassed Celine, they would have already dashed forward.

Skrill was a leader of one of the small-scale guilds that had banded together with Nature’s Alliance to guard the icy cave.

Very long ago, when Nature’s Alliance was at its peak, Skrill’s guild was still a pathetic, tail-wagging, pity-votes-garnering, tagalong of a guild.

However, after Celine took over the leadership position, Nature’s Alliance’s power started to wane. Only then did Skrill begin to mercilessly reap the benefits that originally belonged to Nature’s Alliance, and even express his interests in Celine.

Chapter 322: Crystal Mask

Celine herself had only just advanced to become an official Magus.

Compared to Skrill, she was obviously lacking. In addition, all the Magi that were on good terms with Nature's Alliance were not willing to offend a semi-converted Magus just for this small matter, as with their responsibilities in their respective guilds, they had to consider many more things than most other Magi.

Even if Celine were to win over a few Magi by using her body, those she could win over would at most be regular official Magi that would be much weaker than Skrill.

This was what had allowed Skrill to be so unreserved with his actions.

The smile on Celine's face gradually became more forced as Skrill made things more difficult for her along every step of the way. At the same time, she also sent warnings to Obo and Ilya, telling them not to do anything that might provoke Skrill.

Obo and Ilya felt as if their hearts had been slashed, as they were only able to clench their fists at this scene.

Celine continued, "The reason I'm here is to welcome a famed professor into my guild. He wishes to enter the icy caves."

"Famed professor?" Skrill's brows furrowed.

"Is it Wagrín or Noah? With just their measly amount of strength, they'll just be a burden..."

Skrill sneered.

"No! The professor we've invited is a travelling Magus from the eastern capital. In fact, I myself was rather surprised that he actually agreed to enter Nature's Alliance."

A grin surfaced on Celine's face. "Anyways, he's already here!"

"Hehe... how powerful can a travelling Magus be? Celine, I hope you didn't get cheated!" Skrill's disdainful expression was still on his face.

“Hm, he’s here? Where is he?”

“Here!”

Leylin’s cold voice sounded from behind Skrill.

Skrill’s body stiffened. How powerful was this official Magus to be able to escape his detection and sneak behind his back without any trouble?

If not for the greeting, it would have been an easy task for Leylin to kill him with just a spell.

He turned around rigidly to the sight of a young Magus in black standing behind him with a gentle smile on his lips.

However, the aura he was giving off was terrifyingly strong!

The moment he appeared, dense dark elemental particles permeated the area, repelling the elemental particles revolving around Skrill.

“The aura of an elemental essence conversion... A p-peak rank 1 Magus!” Skrill had even begun to stutter.

Oh, great Gaia! A peak rank 1 Magus was basically a tyrant in the Twilight Zone. Why would one choose to enter a small guild such as Nature’s Alliance to be a professor?

Skrill could not make sense of this situation.

“Looks like you aren’t very respectful to the guild master of our Nature’s Alliance, huh?” Leylin stared at this Magus with interest.

“Surgical transplants? Or meditation techniques that can alter the body shape? I really want to explore further with that research...”

Though his words were indirect, Leylin’s gaze was enough to cause Skrill to shiver in trepidation.

“My lord, you’re such a joker! We of the Eight-Claw Spider Guild and Nature’s Alliance have always been friendly with each other, so why would I be trying to make things difficult for guild master Celine? Haha... haha...”

Skrill bowed towards Leylin, lowering his head and smiling

apologetically.

“Is that so?” Leylin shot Celine a glance.

“Yes, Lord Leylin!” Celine glared coldly at Skrill until an imploring look appeared in his eyes, and then spoke.

“In that case, go back first. I still have some matters that I wish to discuss with Celine!” Leylin instructed.

“Of course, of course. Many thanks, my lord!” Skrill immediately ran back to the fort as if he had been granted an official pardon, not daring to overstep his boundaries.

“Celine! It looks like your Nature’s Alliance isn’t doing that well.”

Leylin looked at Celine, and then slightly eyed the two level 3 acolytes, both of whom were gradually flushing red.

“My apologies!” Celine gave a wry smile.

“Ever since my mentor passed away, we of Nature’s Alliance have not seen anyone advance to an official Magus in a long time. All that’s left is me working alone, which has caused our situation to go downhill. However, with my lord joining us, I’m sure the situation will improve.”

A peak rank 1 Magus was the trump card of middle-scaled guilds. With Leylin, Nature’s Alliance would obviously be able to develop more.

“Whatever. However, I hope you remember our arrangement. If not, I won’t actually help you if you cause some trouble that’s difficult to deal with.”

Leylin reminded Celine. What he had agreed on was that in exchange for her high-grade meditation techniques, accumulation of information regarding Magi as well as easy access to the icy cave, he would be a professor in name.

In fact, Leylin would only be joining the Nature’s Alliance in name. Though he had other plans, he did not wish for Celine to use his name to create trouble outside.

“Don’t worry!” Celine guaranteed. She was an intelligent woman and

knew not to touch Leylin's bottom line.

"Obo and Ilya, quick, greet my lord!" She called out to the people behind her.

Upon hearing her words, Obo and Ilya bowed, looking dazed.

"We give our greetings to our lord!"

Their heads were low, and they did not dare to look at Leylin. However, from their voices, their admiration was apparent.

A peak rank 1 Magus! Obo and Ilya had never imagined that such a Magus would appear in Nature's Alliance.

Now, with a top-notch Magus like Leylin in charge, Nature's Alliance seemed like it would once again emerge as a top power.

Obo and Ilya were immeasurably emotional. Ever since they were young, they had been taken in by Nature's Alliance and naturally had developed very deep feelings for the guild, hoping that it would become more powerful.

Even their resentment from Celine almost being snatched away had lowered considerably.

"Alright! Celine, where are the things I wanted?"

Leylin gestured with his hands, getting the level 3 acolytes to leave, and then spoke to Celine.

Seeing that Obo and Ilya were not enough to catch Leylin's eye, Celine could only sigh in her heart. She then produced a light gold-coloured leaf and a sheet of dark yellow parchment paper.

"This is a map! In the other hand, recorded on this gold leaf is the only high-grade meditation technique that we have: the original Crystal Mask. I hope you can take care of it!"

Celine's expression was very sincere

This attitude was rather surprising to Leylin.

He immediately took the map and took a look. Within were numerous

potholes and markings; it was obvious that Nature's Alliance had been exploring the icy caves for a long time.

Even so, they had not explored the deepest level of the cave, which went to show the immense size of the cave. This was the reason why Leylin had wanted the map.

Otherwise, wouldn't it mean that he would need to blindly explore the icy caves for months or even years before he could gather enough of the Icy Jade Scorpion Breath?

"Also, this Crystal Mask?"

Leylin naturally knew the significance of Celine passing down the original high-grade meditation technique to him. To some extent, this was a symbol of Nature's Alliance. Celine's actions were like she was handing over much of her authority to Leylin.

In addition, handing out the original meditation technique allowed Leylin to see that she did not do anything suspicious to the technique.

.....

Celine was unafraid as she met Leylin's gaze, her eyes filled with a fervent hope and... pleading?

Leylin pursed his lips and extended his hand to take the gold leaf, and a trace of silver spiritual force entered it.

[Discovery of spiritual force, permission to allow transmission of information?] The A.I. Chip prompted.

"Permission granted!" Under Leylin's orders, large amounts of data entered his brain, which also answered the question of why Celine had been so generous as to pass him the original.

"There are only two levels to the Crystal Mask?"

Leylin found it hard to believe as he looked at Celine. "Shouldn't all high-grade meditation techniques have at least four levels?"

In ancient times, high-grade meditation techniques were not just any simple techniques. They represented a route that could allow one to enter

the ranks of the Morning Star Magi!

In other words, high-grade meditation techniques had at least four levels of information, allowing Magi to train until they became Morning Star Magi!

“The second half of the technique is lost, my lord!” Celine looked bitter.

“To be honest, most of the high-grade meditation techniques in the Twilight Zone are incomplete. There is no way to advance further.”

After listening to Celine’s narration, Leylin suddenly thought of Siegfried’s meditation technique, Gaia’s Might.

The high-grade technique of the Earth Fire Association seemed to only have three levels, allowing Magi to train until rank 3. There was no another way for them to advance.

“Even in ancient times, high-grade meditation techniques were not staple goods, and there were a few wars in Twilight Zone. Though the inheritances were successfully passed down, we now lack a lot of the information regarding sub-topics and other information.”

Celine explained to Leylin.

“In addition, even though we have two levels of the Crystal Mask, none of the Magi in Nature’s Alliance have successfully trained in both levels. The contents of the second level need to be supplemented with Mirage Crystals from the Fog World, but unfortunately, these materials have been gone from the Twilight Zone for over ten thousand years.”

Seemingly afraid that Leylin would think of this meditation technique as having little value, Celine quickly handed out something else.

“These are the spell models that Nature’s Alliance has been accumulating until now, within which are our research materials on four rank 2 magic spells.”

She produced a crystal ball and passed it to Leylin. “In addition, we can increase our offerings to you to a million magic crystals per year!”

“Rank 2 spells?” Leylin was inwardly exhilarated, but his expression

remained stolid. “Don’t worry. I’ve made my promise to you, and I definitely won’t go back on my words.”

Chapter 323: Icy Cave

As far as Leylin was concerned, he had collected high-level meditation techniques to supplement the A.I. Chip's information bank and to further understand the contents of the Kemoyin's Pupil and Sacred Flame.

With the A.I. Chip's formidable computation abilities, even if the data was somewhat incomplete, it did not matter. Difficulties regarding advancement were not the issue here, and in any case, Leylin himself would not be practicing all these techniques.

"Good! I am already aware of your sincerity!"

Under Celine's somewhat stunned gaze, Leylin threw a light-gold leaf, the surface of which acted like a memory crystal, back to Celine and indifferently told her, "I now want to enter the icy cave by myself..."

"My lord! The icy cave's terrain is complex, so even though you have a map, would you allow Obo or Ilya, or even Celine herself to guide you personally?"

Anxiety was present all over Celine's face, as this was an opportunity for her relationship with Leylin to become better, and she did not want to miss it.

"No need for that!"

Leylin immediately rejected her suggestion.

In addition to the fact that Leylin had many secrets that were inconvenient for him to reveal in front of others, bringing along people would bring no benefits. According to the A.I. Chip's analysis, the higher the rank of the Icy Jade Scorpion was, the better the quality of the Icy Jade Scorpion Breath would be, and therefore, Leylin desired to penetrate deep into the depths of the Icy Jade Scorpions' lair in hopes of finding a higher ranked beast.

For the commonly found, dangerous adult beasts, which were equal to an official Magus in terms of strength, two level 3 acolytes would simply be like food delivered on a platter.

Even if Celine were to go, it would bring more demerits than benefits.

“In that case, I request that my lord informs me when he comes out. Celine has not brought my lord to have a look at the guild.”

Celine bit her lip, and finally issued her invitation.

“I will!” Seeing her wanting to speak more but hesitating, Leylin smiled inwardly, and immediately complied.

Then, following behind Celine, Leylin arrived at the entrance to the icy cave.

“Here the Nature’s Alliance, Eight Clawed Spiders, the Teal Vine, other guilds and factions guard this place together. They have jointly formed a council of Elders to oversee this place. In the past, our Nature’s Alliance naturally held a vast influence within this council of Elders, but it is very unfortunate that ever since my teacher passed away, Nature’s Alliance’s power has been reduced, and now, we have been pushed aside to the lowest authority.”

While Celine brought Leylin inside a huge building, she occasionally enlightened him as to the current situation of the Nature’s Alliance.

Along the way, Leylin could often see many Magi and acolytes, all wearing different kinds of Chinese gowns with different symbols on them, pass by him on their way in and out.

“This place is known as the Ice Fortress. The 6 guilds jointly vested some funds and built the fortress, and the guilds’ members defend it. Also, many other guilds have set up their own special laboratories here, and they analyze the various materials obtained from the icy caves.... Although our current authority is not much, escorting my lord inside is not a problem.”

Celine spoke as she led Leylin to the base of the fortress.

Within the man-made fortress, Leylin saw a huge white crevice.

A cold wind blew out constantly from the crevice, causing the temperature inside the cavern to drop by several degrees, to the point that even the white wind was condensed into cold ice and white snow which

formed a thick layer that covered the entire crevice.

“The icy cave is filled with this type of ice wind all year long. Incidentally, the cold air and sharp ice ridges inside the cave are thorny nuisances even for our official Magi. After many years of exploration, we discovered that this crevice here is the least harmful, and is a most suitable entrance. Other places are either a dead end or it requires a long period to withstand the chilling cold air. Even a rank 2 Magi cannot necessarily withstand it....”

“En!” Leylin nodded.

There were also other giant surface cracks outside the icy cave, but by seeing how all the magicians paid no attention to them, he knew that these entrances simply were deathtraps, and that here lay the safest path.

“Isn’t this Magus Celine? Do you want to enter the icy cave to explore?”

At this time, the Magus guarding the entrance greeted Celine with a smile, a warm expression in his eyes.

When Leylin saw that this Magus had a floor-length white beard, he somewhat speechlessly sneered inwardly.

“No! I am only escorting our guild’s honorary instructor to the entrance,” Celine replied with a smile.

“Honorary instructor? Him?!”

The old man was startled first, but then immediately began sizing up Leylin, this newly arrived Magus.

Although with Celine’s ability, she couldn’t attract an extremely formidable Magus, some comparatively shallow official Magi had willingly become members of Nature’s Alliance guild to get close to this beauty but were ultimately rejected by her.

Based on the facts that she had revealed, Celine had tried to find at least a semi-converted elemental Magus to join the guild. It was obvious that among her admirers, only Skrill had met these requirements, but Celine would not agree to that.

“Hello, Young Magus! I am known as Old Madre!” The elderly Magus was carefully measuring Leylin up, but he nevertheless spoke very politely.

“I am called Leylin. Nice to meet you.” Leylin smiled but remained very reserved.

Because of him frequently being in the habit of compressing his spiritual force, Leylin’s aura and fluctuation of energy waves were concealed, and thus, Old Madre was unable to discover Leylin’s true strength.

However, even this alone was enough to catch Old Madre’s attention and cause dread, as the unknown was often feared and considered dangerous by all, particularly the Magi.

“Since he is the honorary instructor of your guild, he can certainly go in!”

After confirming Leylin’s capabilities, Old Madre reverted to his business-like appearance.

Immediately, he pulled out something that looked like a metal ball, from within which a red light radiated, and submerged into the entrance.

Po! Within the void, there were faint trembles; these invisible distortions blasted out unceasingly, revealing a red coloured network of rays that covered the entire entrance. This network was clearly a previously-arranged defense mechanism, but it was unknown how it concealed things so that there was not even a leak of any magic waves.

“Such an arrangement...” Leylin hesitated and inwardly muttered. “If I did not know what it was beforehand, perhaps my identity would have also been discovered by it!”

“It is dangerous within the icy caves. A cold wind that is comparable to a level zero magic attack blows everywhere, and there are also many high-energy organisms that gather in some places. Hence, I request that you please not go in too deep!”

Old Madre exhorted a couple of sentences, and then immediately gestured an invitation to Leylin.

“My lord! The cold air attack of Icy Jade Scorpion is of an extreme Yin

nature! I am begging you to be careful!" This was the last sentence Celine said to Leylin.

This scene caused old Madre, who was standing to one side, to be somewhat envious, but he did not say anything.

But he was different compared to Skrill. Old Madre only had warm feelings of admiration for Celine; his attitude did not change to one of terrifying possessiveness.

Therefore, when saw that Celine's intention was to cherish Leylin, he had only chosen to observe this scene.

"I will be careful!"

Leylin smiled in agreement, and after that, he signalled to Old Madre with a nod and then submerged himself within that cold wind and snow.

.....

Whooo! Whooo!

The cold wind howled in Leylin's ears as it violently blew about while he hurriedly slid down.

Finally, along with a light sound, Leylin steadily stood in a snowy area.

"How is it so deep? Aren't I already at least 3 kilometers underground?" Leylin surveyed his surroundings.

With the howling icy wind, there was much noise, like 10,000 musical instruments are being played at the same time.

The illumination contrasted greatly in here against the Fortress, as it was pitch black within the underground icy cave.

"Illuminate!" Leylin lifted his right hand, and a ball of light that was like a bright, incandescent light bulb calmly appeared on his palm.

"Let's go!" As Leylin lightly shouted, the light ball rapidly rose in mid air and rotated.

The ball of light immediately illuminated this place.

Leylin took a quick look all around him. He was currently within a

semicircular, underground icy cavern, the surroundings of which had countless densely packed holes in the walls. It was as if he was within an anthill.

All around on the walls was a thick, translucent layer of ice. The light from his illumination technique fell upon this ice layer and was immediately refracted into multi-colored light that made for a magnificent feast for the eyes!

Flap

Sounds of wings beating against the air resounded massively, as if tens of thousands of sparrows were trying to free themselves from a bag, waking Leylin who was standing awestruck while observing his surroundings.

Immediately, massive black dots welled up from within the underground cavern.

Upon taking a closer look, these black dots all had a pair of transparent, fleshy wings, forked tails that were similar to what swallows had, and tiny eyes and sharp ears that brought about an eerie feeling.

“Sun Chasing Bats! There are at least 10,000 of them!” Leylin quickly estimated the number of these bats.

“Chiiik...Chiik” The numerous bats cried out, and as if black clouds were blotting out the sun, they revolved around that light ball and projected a shadow upon the ground.

“Chiik!” After the colony of bats had surrounded the light ball, as if they had obtained a command they suddenly started to mindlessly attack that light ball. Their wings continuously smacked that ball of light, and like that, they wrapped up the entire light ball causing not even a sliver of light to be seen.

The entire cavern was once again plunged into darkness.

A moment later, the fluttering of wings once again echoed and the numerous Sun Chasing Bats scattered, but there were no traces of the light ball.

“Oh” Leylin sighed: “Igniting light in a region shrouded in darkness is clearly dangerous...”

In the subterranean world, the Twilight Zone’s human race made up only a small portion of the living organisms, and most darkness creatures had already been thoroughly exterminated, and because many of them were weak, they had no option but to hide upon seeing light.

However, in some desolate places outside of Twilight Zone, such light rays would instead stimulate the terrifying characteristics of these creatures of darkness leading to a relentless barrage of attacks!

The creatures of darkness outside of Twilight Zone and the ones that Leylin had just encountered were entirely different matters.

The tide formed by the massive amounts of foreign creatures of darkness were also something that even official Magi generally avoided.

Chapter 324: An Approaching Conspiracy

If the route that Leylin had taken had been filled with hordes of darkness creatures on the way to the eastern capital, the journey would not have been so quiet.

Even if Leylin were to survive, Baelin, Jenny, and James definitely would have died in the mouths of these dark elemental beasts.

It was obvious that within the icy caves, in the places that these beasts convened, they hated light; they would attack with all they had the moment that they detected any.

“Even I would need to spend a lot of time and magic to deal with all of those bats every day. It’s not worth it.”

Leylin sighed.

While the groups of bats were running amok, he had used a concealment spell. Hence, he had naturally not been pursued or attacked by the bats.

After doing some experiments, Leylin made up his mind.

“Night Vision!” He used this spell on himself.

This was an essential spell for many Magi in the subterranean world. With this spell, they could see things in the dark as if it were day without giving off any light that would attract aggressive beasts.

“A.I. Chip, display the map in your records!”

After he casted the spell, Leylin gave an order to the A.I. Chip.

Immediately after, a 3D image appeared in front of his eyes.

This was the simulated model the A.I. Chip had formed after analysing the map Celine had given him.

Nearby Leylin, there were red dots that constantly moved nearby Leylin, indicating the activity of high-energy beings. Compared to the previous inflexible map, this was even more detailed and reliable.

In a cave like this that was as complicated as a maze, Leylin had a definite advantage with his A.I. Chip. At the very least, with the A.I. Chip recording down everything, he would not get lost.

The icy cave could easily cause people to get lost. Every year, there were acolytes or even Magi in the guild who got completely lost in the cave. According to other Magi, if they had been enticed to enter deeper areas, they would have likely died in the mouths of the dark elemental beasts.

“Show me the best route to where the Icy Jade Scorpions are the most active!”

Leylin ordered once again.

Then, on the surface of the 3D map, a red line extended from the marker for Leylin’s current location. It led to the deeper levels of the icy cave, even marking a few important areas.

“Let’s go!”

Leylin looked around him and then disappeared into the crevasse.

Within the fort, in a concealed room.

Skrill saw the scene of Celine sending Leylin into the icy caves through a crystal ball, a grim expression on his face.

“Did that bitch Celine think that I wouldn’t dare do anything to her if she found a peak rank 1 Magus to depend on?”

Skrill’s facial muscles began to contort as he stared at the shapely body in the image, his expression especially insatiable and passionate.

“You’re mine, and I will get you and make you my most beautiful treasure!”

Skrill moaned in an abnormal way.

“How is it? Have you made your decision?” Meanwhile, in a corner of the world, black mist rose and constantly changed shape, eventually turning into a human figure with vague features.

“There’s a large issue with your plan. Celine has already recruited a peak

rank 1 Magus into her Nature's Alliance. Our original plan will not work."

In front of others, Skrill concealed his previous expression and seemed cold.

"Peak rank 1?!" A startled gasp was heard from the mist. "Is your information accurate? Why would a peak rank 1 Magus be willing to join a small guild?"

"How would I know?" Skrill's face darkened. Being scared away by Leylin like that was the ultimate humiliation for him.

"He could easily repel the elemental particles around me, and his elemental conversion was at a very high level. Even if he's not a peak rank 1 Magus, he can't be too far from that... I wonder if that whore, Celine, tempted him..."

At the mention of Celine, Skrill's mood worsened again, leaving him feeling frustrated and unresigned, as if a delicacy meant for him had been robbed by someone else.

"Jeje, a peak rank 1 Magus is a little troublesome, but you should also believe in the guild backing us. A peak rank 1 Magus is definitely not enough to hinder our plan!"

The person shrouded in the mist was very confident.

"What do you plan to do? A peak rank 1 Magus isn't so easily dealt with. Besides, two peak rank fighting would definitely lead to a huge commotion. Aren't you afraid of being exposed?" A curious look appeared on Skrill's face.

"Jeje! It's not as if we don't have a peak rank 1 Magus in our organisation. Did you forget about that good opportunity we have? He will definitely accept!"

"Do you mean..." Skrill's eyes brightened.

.....

"Hah..."

Leylin breathed out white mist.

The moment water vapour reached the outside air, it immediately condensed into tiny crystals that fell to the ground and produced slight sounds.

“A.I. Chip, what’s the current temperature?” Leylin casually asked.

[The temperature is now -75 degrees Celsius!” The A.I. Chip immediately answered.

This temperature was more than deadly for regular humans, but in Leylin’s eyes, this was a mere chill.

As he advanced deeper, he reached the very borders that Celine’s map had indicated.

It was at this place that he entered the territory where the Icy Jade Scorpions were active.

“The Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath!” Fire burned in Leylin’s eyes. This material was extremely effective in suppressing the issues he had from his bloodline, and so he definitely needed to get his hands on it!

As the overall data and gene composition was different between Magi, this was as good as hitting the jackpot for Leylin. If he missed this opportunity, he really had no clue where he would find this material again.

[Discovered being that matches Host’s description. Distance: 621 metres.] The A.I. Chip prompted, causing Leylin to perk up.

He followed in the direction the A.I. Chip indicated, and not long after, he saw the actual body of the being.

At the end of the tunnels of the icy caves, there was a huge cave, on the surface of which were mosses and little bushes, forming a rather infertile area where food was produced.

Here, two groups of beings were having an intense confrontation.

On one end was a large, transparent, green scorpion that looked as if its entire body was made of green ice.

The two large pincers in front constantly danced back and forth, and its venomous sting curved behind it, moving erratically and looking ready to

strike.

Blue, chilly air was produced occasionally, from the mouth of this Icy Jade Scorpion, and spat towards its opponent.

With just a look, Leylin knew that this large Icy Jade Scorpion was what he was looking for.

Facing the Icy Jade Scorpion was a group of blue ants.

These ants were the size of a mature adult's finger. Their two large and sharp saw teeth kept opening and closing, producing terrifying, ear-piercing sounds.

It was a pity that in the face of the hard shell of the Icy Jade Scorpion, their attacks were futile.

Even if they crawled all over the body of the Icy Jade Scorpion, they could not affect its movements. On the contrary, every time the Icy Jade Scorpion raised its large pincers, numerous ants were sent flying.

The chilly air puffed out by the Icy Jade Scorpion also froze many of the ants into little crystals, which it then swallowed.

This was a battle where the Icy Jade Scorpion was foraging for food. It was the absolute winner here.

"A.I. Chip, scan the data of the Icy Jade Scorpion in front of me!"

Leylin immediately ordered. After advancing to become a rank 2 Warlock, the A.I. Chip that was spiritually bonded to him had also gained many benefits. Besides a power up in its simulation abilities, beings like this that had force-field related innate skills could have their data taken down as long as they were below rank 2.

Of course, for beings above rank 2, the A.I. Chip would be discovered and counterattack.

[Icy Jade Scorpion's Strength: 15.9, Agility: 10.3, Vitality: 25, Spiritual force: 45, Special attacks: 1. Icy Breath: An attack where the Icy Jade Scorpion spits out large amounts of extreme icy air. Power: 30-45 degrees. 2. Freeze: When heavily injured, the Icy Jade Scorpion can seal itself in ice

and lower its bodily needs to the minimum level until its body completely heals. 3. Icy Armour: The icy layer on the surface of the Icy Jade Scorpion's body can effectively defend against physical and magical attacks, and also has a slight rebound effect on light magic.]

The A.I. Chip quickly sent out a row of data, and displayed a projection of that Icy Jade Scorpion in front of him.

“Even amongst rank 1 Magi, this is quite powerful!”

Leylin judged.

A Magus's strength could generally be decided based on their spiritual force. Acolytes were definitely below 20, while rank 1 Magi, which were otherwise known as official Magi, had a spiritual force between 20 and 80. As for rank 2 Magi, it was above 80. Based on Leylin's conjectures and the simulations from the A.I. Chip, the spiritual force of peak rank 2 Magi could reach 200!

The strength of most rank 1 Magi's spells was between 20 and 80 degrees.

Not only were its various stats extremely high, the strength of its breath could even reach past a degree of 30. With its innate defensive spell-like icy armour, even a regular rank 1 Magus was not its opponent.

“This strength is almost that of a semi-converted Magus. I wonder what the elites or even emperors of the Icy Jade Scorpions are like?”

At this point, the battle had also reached an end.

Chapter 325: Experiment and Seizure

Leylin shifted his attention to the battlefield.

The Icy Jade Scorpion had now completely won, and after a single hiss, most of the blue ants fled in all directions.

The Icy Jade Scorpion did not chase after the defeated army of ants. Instead, it crawled to the top of a mound and used its large pincers to dig at the mound, revealing a nest with numerous holes that made it look like a honeycomb.

In it were large numbers of orderly lined up white eggs.

Chi chi! The Icy Jade Scorpion gave a cry of exultation and began to pig out.

“My apologies, but I’ll need to disturb you for a while!”

Its feeding time had been interrupted by another being. The tiny red eyes of the Icy Jade Scorpion fixed were fixed on the human figure in front of him, its two large pincers constantly flying in the air and its poisonous stinger flexing behind its back.

Chi chi! The Icy Jade Scorpion was instantly enraged by Leylin, who had disturbed its meal. Large amounts of icy mist was produced from its mouth and aimed at Leylin.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

The temperature in the cave lowered, as exposed rocks shattered into countless fragments wherever this icy mist passed by.

“Extreme cold! The unique breath of the Icy Jade Scorpion is said to possess an ability from the Icy World.”

Leylin muttered to himself while covered in the blue icy mist.

Immediately after, the large amounts of blue gas vied to enter through Leylin’s skin.

[Beep! Detected absorption of large amounts of icy energy. Extremely effective towards suppressing bloodline issue of emotional instability.

Saved!]

The A.I. Chip intoned.

“It’s not enough! This level of iciness is not enough!”

Slightly disappointed, Leylin shook his head. He then extended his right arm, at which large amounts of icy mist converged, forming a small spiral in the air.

This sight caused the opposing Icy Jade Scorpion to pause its actions.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

The blue icy mist shrunk in Leylin’s hand, and its light blue lustre disappeared, revealing a pure hue.

Minutes later, the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath had completely disappeared from Leylin’s hand. Left over in his palm was a thin piece of ice that looked the same as what Celine had traded to him, though this shard was much smaller.

“The crystal shard of the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath!” Leylin glanced at the white icy shard in his hand and suddenly sighed. A silver ray of light flashed, and the icy shard suddenly disappeared from Leylin’s hand.

“This Icy Jade Scorpion is still too weak, and its breath can only help in suppressing my emotions by a small amount. If I really want to cure myself, I’ll need to do tests on an even more powerful Icy Jade Scorpion.”

Leylin looked at the Icy Jade Scorpion in front of him. As it spat out large amounts of chilly air, the surface of this large scorpion looked transparent, and it was looking at Leylin from afar, seemingly about to escape.

“It still has a certain level of intelligence!” Seeing its behavior, Leylin was even more interested.

“I need to obtain a complete experimental body, record its data, and gather some materials!”

Leylin looked at this large scorpion that looked to be formed entirely out of green ice and broke out into a smile...

Several hours later, in a large icy cave that had just been opened.

The entrance to the cave had been sealed by Leylin. He had also used some concealment methods to prevent ordinary beings from discovering this place.

On a large ice platform in the middle of the cave were tens of black iron pillars standing tall to form a cage. The Icy Jade Scorpion from before was kept inside, occasionally letting out low growls.

Leylin off to a side, holding a petri dish that held a green shell within. This shell was from the exoskeleton of the Icy Jade Scorpion.

Drip drop!

A droplet of red liquid was dripped onto the surface of the icy shell, causing the shard to begin to boil and produce large amounts of steam. The shell constantly melted until all that was left was a black fragment.

Leylin was delighted upon seeing this. A glimmer of excitement appeared in his eyes, and he used a pair of tweezers to transfer this fragment to a test tube.

“I’ve pretty much gathered all of the samples and data. All that’s left is to gather data on the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath.”

Leylin glanced at the Icy Jade Scorpion in the cage and suddenly clapped.

Pak pak! Large amounts of sparks flashed at the top of the black iron cage, and blue streaks of electricity whizzed on the pillars, reaching the body of the Icy Jade Scorpion.

Chi chi! Enraged, the Icy Jade Scorpion growled and spat out large amounts of chilly air.

This chilly air formed a thick layer of frost on the metal cage, but most of it automatically drifted to Leylin, forming another one of the white crystallised ice shards from before.

“Effects of electrostimulation: Excellent! Next is to try flames...”

Leylin snapped his fingers and black flames ascended, as vibrant red tongues of flames extended and engulfed the Icy Jade Scorpion...

After extensive experimentation, Leylin finally gathered the information he needed regarding the Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath.

"Matured scorpions can spit out this extreme chilly air attack 5 or 6 times a day. Each time, the amount can form a shard that is a tenth of the size of what Celine gave me."

Leylin glanced at the Icy Jade Scorpion in the cage.

The scorpion currently had its pincers trailing on the ground, looking lifeless. The green on its body had almost disappeared, turning it into almost a translucent crystal scorpion.

Due to its characteristics, Leylin wondered once again if he should confine a few Icy Jade Scorpions, but quickly discarded the idea.

Based on the information he had gathered from Celine and Siegfried; these Icy Jade Scorpions could only survive in the icy caves. The moment they left, they would immediately die. Should they survive, their later generations would slowly turn degenerate.

The Icy Jade Scorpions could only maintain their unique properties while living in the icy caves.

In addition, though these beings had some intelligence, they were very obstinate, or rather, fascinating! This was because Leylin had found a control mechanism inside its sea of consciousness!

Protect this place. Protect the queen! Such determination seemed to be passed down with its bloodline, constantly existing in its mind. If Leylin wished to expel this brand, he would need to destroy its sea of consciousness. However, the Icy Jade Scorpion have long since died, which would render this whole effort meaningless.

"They are so tightly bound as a group!" Such a strange control over them made it difficult for Leylin to understand.

In wolf packs, there were instances of the alpha males being chased out after losing in a battle for power. However, the Icy Jade Scorpion made Leylin think more of queen bees or queen ants. Only in these sorts of simple organisms would there be a situation of ultimate power and

control.

“It looks like there’s a need to go to the nest of the Icy Jade Scorpions!”

Leylin muttered to himself while looking at the Icy Jade Scorpion trapped in the cage.

Though he could occasionally come over and gather the breath of the Icy Jade Scorpion to suppress the issue with his bloodline, he could not truly cure it.

What he wished for was something that could completely eliminate all of the negative emotions from his body!

It wasn’t really a matter of convenience, but rather, it was the fact that it was a weak point that others could target at any time. Leylin wasn’t going to be so stupid as to let it be.

It was evident that just the Icy Jade Scorpion’s Breath could not achieve this. Leylin could only place his attention on the elites that were a rank higher than this Icy Jade Scorpion, or even their emperor...

With this thought, Leylin immediately got to work.

Using the information he had gathered from the body of the Icy Jade Scorpion, he produced a few materials from his spatial pouch and created some powder that was specifically useful against Icy Jade Scorpions.

This powder would produce a unique smell after being burnt, which was an indescribable temptation to Icy Jade Scorpions.

With this powder, Leylin walked around the region where Icy Jade Scorpions were active and caught over ten regular Icy Jade Scorpions, and even an elite as well.

Elite Icy Jade Scorpions were bigger than the regular Icy Jade Scorpions by a factor of almost 1.5 times. Their jade-like bodies were also covered with mysterious patterns.

These patterns covering the back of these elite Icy Jade Scorpions were curses, but they were incomplete, causing Leylin to be puzzled.

All Leylin could do was get the A.I. Chip to record these images so that

he could do research on them in the future.

These elite Icy Jade Scorpions were almost as powerful as semi-converted Magi. With the added bonus of being in the icy caves, their strength was even further amplified.

However, in front of Leylin, who had now regained enough of his power to be equivalent to a peak rank 1 Magus, it was like snow that had been exposed in front of the sun, allowing him to obtain many good research materials.

The quality of the elite Icy Jade Scorpion's Breath was far above that of regular ones. It was enough to suppress the negative emotions caused by his bloodline for ten years, which filled Leylin with more hope of being able to completely rid himself of it!

Leylin was now hidden behind an icy plain, watching a group of Icy Jade Scorpions that were migrating.

There were tens of Icy Jade Scorpions gathered here, and with Leylin's interference, about half of them had left the area. Moreover, these were all matured bodies!

The entire group went berserk for a period of time, but even after sweeping through the area, they still could not find any traces of Leylin.

The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor could not do anything but choose to migrate to another location.

However, this was exactly what Leylin had planned on.

Previously, the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor had hidden in a nest that was heavily guarded by numerous elite Icy Jade Scorpion guards. The moment there was any situation, Leylin would immediately be met with the attacks from the entire family.

The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was akin to the existence of a peak rank 1 Magus. Along with the tens of Icy Jade Scorpions, all of which had the strength of official Magi, peak rank 1 human Magi would almost certainly die. Even if it was Leylin, it would be difficult if he could not use his full power as a rank 2 Warlock.

However, the situation had changed!

Chapter 326: Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor

Due to Leylin's use of guerilla tactics, the cyclone of Icy Jade Scorpions had lost many of its members.

In addition to this, the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor had been separated from the safety of its den; it chose to make its move.

This movement was the opportune moment for Leylin to act!

With just a thought, Leylin caused a fierce, black hurricane to suddenly appear to sweep across the icefield.

As the violent black hurricane swept forth, the layer of ice that had remained frozen for ten million years immediately cracked open, and turned into white powder that scattered in the wind.

The hurricane slightly took on the shape of a tornado, collided with the cyclone of Icy Jade Scorpions that were in the process of moving away.

"Jji! Jji!*

The cyclone of Icy Jade Scorpions suddenly emitted intense howls.

As they made this noise, all the Icy Jade Scorpions immediately gathered together, puffs of frosty air came out from their mouths as they constructed a very thick layer of ice that formed a wall in front of them.

As if unsatisfied with the firmness of the ice wall, these Icy Jade Scorpion did not stop exhaling; instead, they continued until the ice wall's thickness had exceeded two meters before they gradually stopped.

Ka-chak! Ka-chak!

The black hurricane threw itself at the ice wall, and an ear-splitting noise similar to scraping one's fingernails on glass echoed. Little flakes of ice were constantly being shaved off the wall.

The Icy Jade Scorpions at the back immediately increased their rate of puffing to patch up the gaps in the wall caused by the hurricane.

The remaining Icy Jade Scorpions united, and their combined power was equivalent to ten official Magi working together. Even a peak level 1

Magus would have to withdraw if facing an attack of this degree!

But Leylin was no ordinary peak rank 1 Magus! Although the total quantity of his current spiritual force was only that of a peak rank 1 Magus, but his spiritual force had already undergone the rank 2 Warlock advancement, and as such had the ability to solidify.

“Hmmp!”

At this moment, a cold snort was heard from within the black hurricane.

Immediately, a massive amount of silver spiritual force dispersed and covered the surface of the black hurricane. Silver cracks appeared on the hurricane’s surface.

From afar, there seemed to be a layer of silver on top of the black wind blades.

Bang! Bang!

Under the attack of the wind blades, the giant ice wall could no longer hold on, and deep fissures appeared in the wall. These fissures increased in size until the wall crumbled completely.

Ka-cha!

Bang! The giant ice wall fell to the ground with a loud noise, and the black hurricane then engulfed the entire cyclone of Icy Jade Scorpions.

Ji! Ji! Numerous Icy Jade Scorpions roared, the jade radiance on their bodies glimmered as they resisted the attacks of the wind blades.

Although the attacks of these wind blades were very strong, most of these Icy Jade Scorpions were fully-grown adults. With their icy armour and their defences from the chilly air about them, they remained in a deadlock for quite a while.

The black hurricane came quickly but disappeared just as fast.

In several seconds, the hurricane had swept through the place where the cyclone of scorpions was and vanished into the horizons of the icefield, faintly emitting incisive sounds.

However, after hearing these sounds, all the Icy Jade Scorpions became frantic as if they had gone mad, and pursued the hurricane.

It was a pity that speed was their weakness, and they could only look on helplessly as the hurricane swept further and further away, until it finally faded into the horizon.

Leylin urged the hurricane on, and the green shadow wrapped within sped forth until it was confirmed that the Icy Jade Scorpions could no longer overtake it. Only then did the hurricane disperse, revealing the identity of the green shadow.

After seeing the black hurricane dispersing, the figure of a green Icy Jade Scorpion was revealed. This Icy Jade Scorpion's build was slender, and it appeared to be very gentle and exquisite. Compared to ordinary Icy Jade Scorpions, it was rather on the small side.

However, it was different from other Icy Jade Scorpion partially because of its imposing mannerisms. In addition to these, on the back of this Icy Jade Scorpion was a complete pattern, which had been seen earlier on the body of an elite Icy Jade Scorpion, though it had been incomplete. This pattern had the form of a distorted female's face.

This Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor assumed an offensive stance and lifted both its arms, facing Leylin.

"You do not need to struggle anymore. You should know of the disparity between our strengths!"

Silver spiritual force flashed in Leylin's eyes while he grinned.

Relying on his present strength, he would need to squander a large amount of spiritual force and magic power to face off against the cyclone of Icy Jade Scorpions that had already lost most of its soldiers. After all, the opposing party could be regarded as a group of Magi working together, with a peak rank 1 Magus commanding them! As he had yet to recover his strength as a rank 2 Magus, even Leylin felt dread.

But now, he only needed to take care of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor.

Jji! Jji!

Reacting to Leylin's words, the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor calmly issued a sound that increased by several pitches that made it even more piercing.

A big, green, misty brilliance was emitted from its shell, forming a thick ice armor that covered its body.

After putting on this ice armor, the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor increased in size; it had gone far beyond that of an elite Icy Jade Scorpion and was almost the size of three ordinary Icy Jade Scorpions added together.

Whoosh! The Icy Jade Scorpion emperor simply left an afterimage where he had stood as he turned into a dark green ray that wanted to attack Leylin.

"Sigh. In the end, this problem can only be resolved with brute force!"

Leylin quickly drew back, and the moment he retreated, the ground suddenly exploded, crushed stones flying everywhere to reveal a big hole.

Pu!

The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor withdrew its pincers, and puffed out a big blob of blue icy breath without hesitation and aimed it at Leylin.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

The sounds of solidification constantly sounded, and there was even a transparent twisting seen in the air.

"Such chilliness! It even caused the air to freeze!"

Seeing such a powerful chilliness, Leylin could not help but be excited. Only this type of crystallised breath could completely eradicate the emotional instability that had resulted from his Warlock bloodline

"A.I. Chip! Scan the opponent's data!"

Leylin's eyes flashed blue.

[Beep! Task established, beginning scanning. Beep! Target is covered by an unknown force field, unable to be scanned.] The A.I. Chip quickly intoned.

"Oh!" Large amounts of black air were emitted from Leylin's body,

forming a shield adorned with various patterns. It smashed into the chilly air.

He could disregard the breaths of regular Icy Jade Scorpions, but the attack of this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was not something he could withstand with just his body. If he did that, he suspected that this fierce chilly air would freeze his body to death!

The shield formed of black air slammed into the blue icy mist, and darkness formed at the centre. It was like a black hole, swallowing the shield and chilly air and even the air itself.

“Unknown force field? Where is it?” Leylin asked. With the amplified power of the A.I. Chip, only rank 2 creatures could shield themselves from the scanning. This Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was clearly at peak rank 1.

[At its back, where the distorted human face is.]

The A.I. Chip responded quickly, and after hearing this expected answer, the gears in Leylin’s mind began to turn rapidly.

A few exceptionally formidable creatures from other worlds had almost godlike strength. They had formed unique runes of their own that symbolised their path, achievements, strength and many other attributes.

This rune often had a mysterious strength that could be used as a link to them and could be passed on to descendants, and could even traverse dimensions.

This phenomenon was more distinct in bloodline creatures. Leylin even suspected that the perfect rune formed from his innate spells, as well as the rune of the human face on the back of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor could be classified as such.

Ji ji!

Seeing Leylin blocking its attack, a trace of human-like mockery appeared in the gaze of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor. It suddenly lifted its back.

Weng Weng!

The female face on its back seemed to come to life, rays of green light circulated and produced an ear-piercing wail.

Ji ji!

Invisible sound waves streaked past Leylin's body, and he was in a slight daze.

Xiu! The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor immediately seized this rare opportunity and rushed to Leylin's front as its large claw snipped at Leylin's waist.

Meanwhile, Leylin looked absent-minded and was actually stuck in a daze, allowing the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor to attack as it liked.

Ka-cha! Sharp giant claws immediately chopped Leylin's body into two, and large amounts of blood, water, and internal organs gushed out. The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor's gaze exhibited its elation.

Shua! Shua! Shua!

However, this joy did not persist for a long time. The blood that flowed from Leylin's body seemed to have a life of its own as it twisted, forming a crimson cage that closed in on the Icy Jade Emperor.

Leylin, who was now in two halves on the ground, began to transform, finally revealing his true appearance. He was formed of countless shadows, and was actually an illusionary virtual body!

There was a flash a distance away, and Leylin appeared.

He looked at the human face on the back of the Icy Jade Emperor, fear still lingering in his mind.

"What a terrifying illusory spell, to actually be able to affect me, even though my spiritual force is already solidified! If not for having met that banshee in the secret plane of the Spirit Slaying Sect and done research on the spiritual attacks like wails, it would have been dangerous!"

The attack of the human face on the back of the Icy Jade Emperor was even more powerful and strange than that of the banshee. Leylin had almost fallen into its trap.

Ji! Ji!

Countless blood tendrils climbed up the cage, engulfing the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor. It constantly howled and waved its large claws around, constantly puffing out.

“I need to finish this fast!” Leylin flung out numerous potion bottles.

These bottles exploded in the cage, forming an immense fiery mist that kept the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor inside.

This was what Leylin had brewed through numerous experiments, a potion that was especially made while taking into consideration the properties of the body of the Icy Jade Scorpion. Though he did not have a sample from the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, Leylin had increased the dosage. Based on the simulation experiments from the A.I. Chip, this potion was enough to affect a peak rank 1 Icy Jade Scorpion and cause it to become rigid.

As expected, as more mist entered the body of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, with crimson tentacles constantly twining around it, its howls became weaker until they disappeared.

Chapter 327: Ancient War

Within the icy caves, in a hidden room.

This was the temporary laboratory that Leylin had created in the basement. It was like a large-scale basement, with Icy Jade Scorpions trapped in various holes. However, they all looked lifeless, as if most of their energy had been sapped.

At the centre of the laboratory, Leylin was excitedly facing a small mountain of ice.

At the end of the war, the emperor of the Icy Jade Scorpions found that it was impossible for it to escape, and it could only resort to its ultimate innate skill—Freezing!

This was an ability unique to Icy Jade Scorpions, where a layer of solid ice was formed around the body until their injuries recovered.

The fact that it had used this move showed it had no other alternative.

The block of ice in front of Leylin was huge and could be even said to be an ice mountain. Large amounts of mist emanated from the mountain, lowering the surrounding temperature.

The layer of ice was no ordinary one. Its hardness could even be compared to steel.

The Emperor Icy Jade Scorpion's protective layer of ice was naturally even more terrifying than that of regular Icy Jade Scorpions. However, this was merely a small issue for Leylin.

Besides, though this move could protect the Emperor Icy Jade Scorpion, it was also a prison! Hence, after completing his research, Leylin had used this layer of ice to imprison it.

Leylin was now holding a thin, long needle, and jabbed it into the ice mountain!

This needle had been custom made. It was a shiny silver colour and almost a metre long. The moment it contacted the surface of the ice

mountain, it produced a sound similar to that produced when molten iron meets water.

Next, a red dot appeared on the surface of the ice mountain. The silver needle had pierced through the layer like it was going through cotton, and directly reached the shell of the Emperor Icy Jade Scorpion.

It was currently like an insect frozen in amber, unable to move and even unable to blink.

Zi! The needle shook a little and then pierced into the body of the Emperor Icy Jade Scorpion, extracting some green blood.

After seeing this blood, Leylin's expression showed his excitement.

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Half a day later, Leylin stared at the green blood essence in the petri dish, looking hesitant.

The Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was now similar to a peak rank 1 Magus in terms of its strength, and that obviously meant he could not refine the pure ancient bloodline from it.

Even so, Leylin had found a lot of information from its bloodline.

Some ancient creatures could use a special method and transmit information and images to their descendants through their bloodline. This information was hidden deep within their genes, and only the creature itself could awaken it.

But Warlocks were different! Their research and understanding of bloodlines was enough to undo the complicated genetic lock and allow this ancient information to see the light of day once more!

Leylin had found some ancient information in the bloodline of the Icy Jade Scorpion.

"Though I don't know if it's good or bad, I'll just look at it!"

Now, after seeing the blood essence of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, even Leylin's own Giant Kemoyin Serpent bloodline trembled, giving him some confidence.

“Retrieving spirit memory!”

A sliver of silver spiritual force extended from Leylin’s forehead, entering the bloodline of the Icy Jade Scorpion.

.....

Rumble!

It seemed like he had gone through a long period of darkness before he saw light again.

Leylin woke up, but he now found himself immobile. However, his body kept crawling, as if he was an observer that was living in this body. He could observe, but had no control.

Surrounding him was a world of white snow with a layer of ice on the ground. Leylin saw his reflection on the layer of ice on the ground.

He had six jointed legs and a stinger, but his upper body was that of an adult male, though his two large hands had turned into pincers.

“What kind of ancient creature is this?” Leylin was stupefied.

There was little information passed down in the South Coast. There was no record of this being in the illustrated handbook of ancient creatures, and there were also many powerful creatures from other worlds that were not recorded. That was why Leylin did not know the true identity of this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor ancestor.

However, the vast, bubbling strength it had made it obvious to Leylin that this creature was far above him in terms of might. It had even reached the level of a Morning Star Magus!

Pak!

An ice mountain that was thousands of metres tall broke into pieces in front of the Scorpion Man, and it brandished its large pincers as it advanced indifferently. Occasionally, it would battle with beings that were as powerful as it was, and the stray ripples would break off large fragments of ice.

Until one day!

Ka-cha! The Scorpion Man had just ripped up an ice dragon, and was gulping down its flesh and blood. As if sensing something, it raised its head and looked into the horizon.

Rumble!

The heavens split and the earth shattered. In the sky far away, it looked as if someone was tearing out a large hole. A horizontal crack that spanned a hundred thousand metres emerged in the sky.

Snakes! A giant black snake with silver armour! There was even the Giant Kemoyin Serpent that Leylin was especially familiar with rushing through the spatial crack, entering this icy world.

The appearance of these giant ancient serpents marked the start of a massacre.

The Scorpion Man howled. He could feel that just the stray ripples from the spatial crack was enough to heavily injure or kill him! Furthermore, every one of those snakes did not lose out to him in terms of strength. However, affected by his own bloodline and the surroundings, he couldn't help but rush to the opening of the spatial crack.

Along with him were other beings of this world. Icy Dragons, Giant Chilly Eagles, Ice Spirits, and even some creatures that were natural enemies were somehow summoned, putting down their prejudices against each other and rushing to the battlefield.

The two forces slammed into each other, blood and flesh flying, the space contorting around them.

The Scorpion Man and a giant serpent battled. It was as if he had gone crazy, constantly attacking it.

This all came from a premonition deep inside him. If these snakes were to continue existing here, this place would be damaged or even destroyed.

Kill! Kill! Kill! Life and death battles went on, and it was common for Morning Star Magi to fall. There were also corpses falling from the sky, their auras enough to make Scorpion Man tremble in fear.

“Hsss!”

At this moment, a loud hissing from a snake caused the Scorpion Man to come back to himself.

All of the creatures on the battlefield looked at the spatial crack.

A ferocious ancient aura leaked out through the crack, and all the snakes respectfully lowered their heads. The Scorpion Man was forced to lie on the ground from the pressure.

The black crack suddenly extended, and a large ball of snakes that was the size of a planet seemed to want to pass through the crack and descend on this world.

The aura emitted from the snake ball made the Scorpion Man shudder from the very depths of his heart.

The other creatures of the Icy World were just like him.

Weng weng! The entire Icy World trembled, layers of ice breaking to reveal a female giant who was several tens of thousands of metres tall.

This female giant had a very boorish face. She had copper armour, a pike and a green shield.

The female giant first roared at the snake ball, but received no answer. The large snake ball constantly forged forward, widening the spatial crack at its seams.

Upon seeing this, the female giant raised the pike in her hands and pierced towards the snake ball.

A devastative power appeared on the surface of the pike, red lightning flowing around the body of the pike. It was as if the the gods had cast out a pike that could destroy worlds!

“Hsss!”

The pike arched through space, appearing in front of the snake ball.

The snakes that had entrenched themselves separated, revealing the body of a beauty in the middle of the snake ball. Every single strand of her

hair was made of tiny snakes, yet she did not look strange, but was instead very charming!

The woman smiled sweetly, surpassing the limits of race with her enchanting features. All creatures, and even space and the world found her pleasing to the eye, not wanting to see her take on this pike.

A few creatures of the icy world even betrayed their faction and began aiming for the female giant. However, before they even came close, they were turned into powder by the lightning on the body of the female giant.

Pak!

Two large palms formed of countless groups of snakes extended from the snake ball, then grabbed hold of the pike and broke it!

The pike that seemed to hold the power to destroy the world was split into two halves by these large hands.

However, they were not yet satisfied, ruthlessly grabbing at the female giant!

A black blade came out of the spatial crack and instantly appeared in front of her.

Bang!

The female giant's head and body separated, and large amounts of green blood spurted out.

A violent explosion resounded through the battlefield, and countless dangerous spatial cracks were created.

A droplet of green blood that was almost as large as a human head fell on the back of the Scorpion Man. The intense pain and burn immediately caused him to let out a miserable cry.

He was then swallowed by a large spatial crack.

In the last moments which he was being swallowed, the last thing the Scorpion Man saw, was a gigantic Mountain Wyvern made entirely from an ice mountain which descended onto the battlefield, shattering the spatial crack.

Within the snake ball, a woman's sigh was heard...

Darkness! A darkness that spread throughout the heavens and earth surged up and invaded Leylin's body.

"Hah!"

Leylin gasped in large breaths, cold sweat rolling down his face.

"That woman! The one inside the snake ball! I've seen her before!"

Leylin immediately thought of the dreamlike trance he had been when he had advanced to be a rank 1 Warlock. The woman inside there looked to be the exactly the same person as who he had seen from the bloodline of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor!

"Unless... That woman in the snake ball is the legendary Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes! And was the war that I just saw the battle where the ancient Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes invaded the Icy World...?"

Chapter 328: Information Of The Bloodline And A Conjecture

Leylin felt that he had correctly deduced the gist of the story.

In ancient times, after the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes had failed to take over the Shadow World, she brought her descendants with her and migrated to the Purgatory World. It was probably during this time that she had infiltrated the Icy World!

However, the inhabitants of the Icy World's naturally resisted this invasion.

According to Leylin, the Scorpion Man seemed to have received some powerful spiritual insight. Being able to interfere with the strength of a Morning Star creature through the spirit was either the work of the female giant, or the will of the world.!

The result was the death of the female giant, but with the great effort on the part of the Ice Mountain Wyvern, the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes' plans to invade the area were thwarted.

In the great battle, the female giant had been killed, and a droplet of her blood had landed on the back of Scorpion Man, which had wounded him greatly. Unable to avoid the spatial crack, he was swept in.

In the end, Scorpion Man had travelled to the Twilight Zone through this spatial pathway and had then died from his injuries.

Even so, he still had the strength of a Morning Star Magus, and the blood of the female giant, whose power was inconceivable. Hence, after his death, this entire region was affected by the radiation from ice, forming a topography and climate similar to that in the Icy World!

The Icy Jade Scorpions evidently had some connection with the Scorpion Man, but this connection had degenerated. Its human upper torso had completely disappeared, and there were no other obviously similar characteristics.

“It’s because of this that Icy Jade Scorpions could survive! They were actually creatures from another world. They could only survive and reproduce because of the radiation of extreme cold here.”

Leylin sighed and thought about the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes.

He reckoned that the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes should have attacked the Icy World after migrating from the Purgatory World, due to the fact that this world must have been extremely important to her and her race.

After the setback when trying to seize the Shadow World, she had no choice but to withdraw and bring her race to Purgatory World.

However, the fire attribute of the Purgatory World did not quite suit snakes, which were more compatible with the shadow element. After reproducing and beginning to adapt, their race even began to have some fire elemental attributes in their blood, but they were also mixed with the chaotic will of the Purgatory World in their bloodline.

This could be the origin of the emotional instability of warlocks with the bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent. After all, snakes were usually not so emotionally unstable as to lose control and rage.

Based on Leylin’s deductions, the issue with ancient Warlocks with snake bloodlines should have been an apathetic nature, and they might have even needed to hibernate. However, with the chaotic will added in from their time in the Purgatory World, their emotions were also altered.

The original characteristic of coldness had become a fiery temper!

Hence, the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes had attacked the Icy World once more, probably hoping to use the chilliness there to treat the emotional instability issue with her bloodline!

Of course, her plan failed in the end, but the Icy World had also paid a large price.

For this reason, the Icy Jade Scorpion Breath from the Icy World was useful in treating the emotional instability that stemmed from Leylin’s bloodline.

“Sigh... what a complicated relationship!” Leylin held his forehead, which was starting to hurt from how hard he was thinking.

“Though these are all but conjectures, my thoughts should be correct. It doesn’t matter even if I’m wrong, since the Mother of Ten Thousand Snakes, Ice Mountain Wyvern, and the Purgatory, Icy, and Shadow Worlds are too far away to even matter...”

Leylin smiled wryly, “I just need to know one thing, which is how the breath of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor can heal my emotional instabilities. That will be enough!”

“A.I. Chip! Set up a plan to extract the Icy Jade Scorpion Breath and design my treatment process!”

Leylin immediately ordered.

[Mission establishing, beginning analysis! Setting up data model!] After receiving the command, the A.I. Chip quickly began to operate.

Meanwhile, Leylin, deep in thought, stroked his chin.

Honestly, after seeing that ancient war, it was impossible for him not to be stirred up. That droplet of blood that had dripped onto the back of Scorpion Man had stirred up Leylin’s interest as well as his desire to conduct research on it!

That was a strength that far surpassed Morning Star Magi—it might even be equal to a great rank 5 Magus. It could even be from a bloodline that was at rank 6 or 7, which even ancient Magi would have found difficult to attain!

If Leylin gained it, how much stronger could he become?

Though Warlocks could not change their bloodlines, doing research on the blood of these existences was sure to be unbelievably useful for his future.

In addition, the Scorpion Man had had the strength of a Morning Star Magus while he was alive. There was no need to refine his blood. It was the purest bloodline possible from an ancient creature.

Leylin's breathing became rough just from wishing that he could enter deeper into the icy caves and look for the remains of the Scorpion Man.

However, he then smiled wryly.

Based on the remaining memories left in the bloodline of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor just now, Leylin knew that Nature's Alliance and the other small guilds only controlled a tiny area of the icy caves.

Deeper underground, there lived all sorts of icy creatures that were ten or even hundreds of times stronger than the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, all of which formed their own small Icy World.

The remains of the Scorpion Man were probably at the deepest level of this Icy World!

There, rank 2 icy creatures would be running rampant. It wouldn't even be surprising if rank 3 creatures emerged there.

Even if Leylin became a rank 3 Warlock, was not sure that he would be able to leave without a scratch. He would need to at least have the strength of a Morning Star Magus to completely break into this place to get the remains and bloodline.

"Strength! It all comes down to strength!" Leylin smiled wryly and gave up on any thoughts of exploring further in.

Though those were great items, Leylin was not going to risk his life for them!

Leylin had always been very prudent. If he was less than 70% confident, or if his life would be in danger, he would definitely choose not to take this risk.

Besides, in a situation where the icy caves had existed for such a long time and yet nobody had realised their true origins. Leylin was not afraid that other Magi would come here. There were also the icy creatures down there, which were a great defensive line.

He had already figured things out. Once he had enough power, he would come back here and obtain the presents from Icy World.

“Things need to be done one at a time. First, I need to deal with the problem of my emotional instability!”

Leylin’s pupils returned to their calm state, his expression revealing his rationality.

.....

Outside the icy caves in the Twilight Zone.

“Take note. The expedition into the icy caves is very dangerous this time. Though you are all the cream of the crop in our guild, as long as you haven’t become an official Magus, you have virtually no way to protect yourself in there. Take care not to leave the sight of the team leader, understand?”

A valiant looking middle-aged man dressed in armour was currently preaching to a group of acolytes.

“Hey, Mully! Are you bringing acolytes down there again?” Old Madre, who was guarding the area, greeted him with a smile.

“Yes! The joint conference is beginning soon. It’s best to raise the strength of these little monkeys under me. It can’t be helped even if it’s a little dangerous.”

“How is it? Have there been any icy explosions or migrations of dangerous creatures within the caves?”

“Currently, I haven’t received any reports that mention such a thing. Furthermore, there’s currently a famed professor from Nature’s Alliance in there. If there is a problem, you can ask him for help, especially since we’re all allies!”

Old Madre laughed and then mentioned Leylin.

“Professor Leylin who came from the eastern capital? I heard that he’s a master at the peak of rank 1!”

Though Mully said all this, he still looked unwilling to accept this. It looked like even if he really met Leylin, they wouldn’t be able to get along.

After all, it was shocking that a peak rank 1 Magus had entered a small

guild such as Nature's Alliance.

Like many other Magi, Mully thought that Celine was bragging.

"Celine really is quite pitiful. She's been going around looking for help nonstop. Nature's Alliance is in a very dangerous position."

Old Madre sighed, but a glimmer of delight flashed in his heart.

Whether it was Leylin or Mully being on the losing end in there, it was still going to be a delight to see.

"Hmph! Whose fault is it that you two are always harbouring evil intentions towards my Celine?"

Madre thought in his heart while revealing an enthusiastic grin. Compared to when Leylin had entered, he was much more passionate while explaining things of note to the acolytes.

From an outsider's perspective, Old Madre was still a very respectable senior.

Whoosh!

At this moment, large amounts of chilly gusts of wind blew out from the crack in the ground, and the acolytes could not help but wrap themselves tightly in their clothes.

"This means someone is coming up... huh! They're fine!"

Old Madre was bewildered.

"What's going on?" Mully rushed over and asked.

"It's Magus Leylin! He's out! Magus Celine has already come here quite a few times to check if he's out yet. I need to inform her!"

Old Madre did not take him seriously, even complacently laughing after seeing Mully clenching his two fists.

Bang!

A figure with a large, icy mountain on his shoulder rushed out from the crack.

“Are you Leylin, the new, famed professor that joined Nature’s Alliance?” Mully sounded impolite.

“Yes! What’s the matter?” He was beaming widely.

This person was naturally Leylin. In this period of time, after constantly extracting the breath of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, he had already healed the emotional instability from his bloodline using the treatment designed by the A.I. Chip.

The extreme chill originating from Icy World, as well as support from the A.I. Chip had completely expelled the chaotic will in his bloodline that came from Purgatory World.

Though there might still be an issue deeper in his DNA, the A.I. Chip calculated that until he became a Morning Star Magus, the emotional instability of Warlocks would not be an issue. Leylin was therefore in a good mood.

Chapter 329: The Headquarters' Location

"I...I..."

Mully hesitated. Although he doubted the other party's strength, Magi were a rational bunch. If it wasn't for Celine, he would not even dare to provoke the other party.

Now, he was somewhat uncertain.

If Leylin really possessed such huge power and he decided to challenge him, wouldn't he be courting death?

Immediately, Mully opened his mouth wide, " This... this is..."

In this moment, Leylin had already thrown the ice mountain on the floor, producing a loud sound.

Within the ice mountain stood a thin bodied Icy Jade Scorpion that was unmoving, as if it were a statue.

"Celine! Get some people here and move these items!" Leylin contacted Celine through the secret imprint, and from the other end came a surprised squeal.

"Oh? Previously, Magus Leylin went down with the purpose to do research on the Icy Jade Scorpion. It looks like his gains were pretty good! Unexpectedly, he even caught a smaller one. It seems like it's a young one!"

Old Madre smiled and explained.

While in its frozen state, the Icy Jade Scorpion's breath was suppressed to its lowest and Old Madre did not see it.

"No, damn it! This isn't some young Icy Jade Scorpion! It's the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor! A peak rank 1 Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor!" Mully retreated while stammering.

"I have seen it before. This is absolutely the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor! Look at the terrifying markings on its back!"

Mully retreated to the edge of the site, afraid that the Icy Jade Scorpion

Emperor would go wild at any time.

“Raurghhh... Seriously!”

Madre picked up what seemed like a pair of glasses and placed it on his nose, taking a good look at the Icy Jade Scorpion. This was then followed by a squeal as she took a few steps back.

“Mag... Magus Leylin! Di-Did you catch this?”

Old Madre started to stammer as well.

“Of course!” Leylin smiled and nodded.

After having suppressed the emotional instability from his bloodline, Leylin massacred all of the regular Icy Jade Scorpions and collected their materials. As for the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, he could not bear to kill it.

After all, its value while still alive was much greater than the value of the materials on its body.

He still had many simulations that he needed to complete on the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, and Leylin was also extremely interested in the waning of the Icy Jade Scorpion’s life once it were to leave the radiation from the icy cave.

Hence, he had to wrap the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor and bring it out.

Leylin could only gather all the materials from the regular Icy Jade Scorpions inside the spatial pouch, and since it could not hold living beings, he had to carry an ice mountain all the way out.

However, the look of disbelief on the faces of these two Magi that turned into one of respect was rather amusing to Leylin.

He did not intentionally try to conceal his powers, but there was the underlying intent of showing his might.

After all, the might of a peak rank 1 Magus was not unfounded, and an Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor with a strength comparable to a peak rank 1 Magus was enough to intimidate everyone.

Although Celine had been actively disseminating the information of her guild, she had not acquired the acknowledgment from the other guilds as Leylin had been keeping a low profile. Most Magi had even thought of this as an elaborate scam and were here merely to look for trouble.

But now, these small guilds would think twice before coming forward.

Though he wasn't afraid of trouble, he hated having to personally involve himself in these small matters. It wasn't a bad idea to scare them away with this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor.

Even between peak rank 1 Magi, their battle abilities were varied. Since Leylin was able to catch a Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor that was similar to a peak rank 1 Magus, didn't that mean that he was at the top of the peak rank 1 Magi?

Old Madre and Mully exchanged glances, and their gazes towards Leylin was filled with reverence.

"Lord Leylin, it's great that you could come back safely!"

At this point, Celine was excited as she brought back the two acolytes from before.

Leylin looked at them and nodded. It seemed like Celine had been waiting here with these two acolytes after he had left, which was rather considerate of her.

"An Icy Jade Scorpion is a creature with the might of an official Magus and they lived in clusters. Initially, I had my worries, but thankfully we were under the blessing of Gaia!"

Celine patted herself on her chest and was hesitant at the start, as she was worried for Leylin.

Hearing that, Old Madre and Mully surreptitiously rolled their eyes.

The one who should be worried should be the Icy Jade Scorpions. This Lord had already captured the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor and the remaining Icy Jade Scorpions had either disbanded or sought refuge with the other cyclones.

At this moment, Celine found the ice mountain beside Leylin, “ Do we need to move this?”

“En! Send two people to follow me to shift it to the Eastern capital before we look for a lab to analyse it further.” Leylin patted on the ice mountain behind him.

“ If you wish to find a lab, the headquarters of the Nature’s Alliance is just nearby for your Lordship’s usage.”

Celine’s eyes sparkled and suggested, “Furthermore, I would like to discuss in detail with your Lordship regarding the previous matter.”

“Your headquarters is nearby? Great, let’s go!” Leylin nodded in agreement. There wasn’t anything important in the basement he used in the eastern capital. All valuable equipment was carried on his person at all times.

As for the overall facilities, Nature’s Alliance’s lab was definitely better than his own established lab.

“Hop on and call another carriage to move this ice mountain back to the headquarters!”

Celine commanded. She went forward to take a good look at the Icy Jade Scorpion.

Through the translucent ice, a rune that closely resembled a face could be seen at the back of the Icy Jade Scorpion.

“This is... the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor!!!” Celine covered her mouth with her eyes wide opened.

.....

Whoosh!

A huge waterfall which seemed to fall from the sky like a white curtain, created huge splashes in the underground pond. A constant rumbling sound of the water echoed in the surroundings.

After passing the waterfall, there was a small canyon.

Scattered around the canyon was a variety of plantations and some historical structures.

The landmarks and road signs were covered in vines, with constant rays of light shining from above.

This was where the Nature's Alliance headquarters resided.

Leylin looked around with curiosity at the whimsical constructions.

Although these buildings appeared slightly run-down, there were slight glints of magical glows which indicated the existence of a powerful spell that had been cast on the wooden walls.

Nature's Alliance, albeit being a small guild, had accumulated their high-level meditation techniques over multiple generations in the past hundreds and thousands of years, proving their might.

Periodically, a few Magi acolytes, dressed in grey gowns, would come out of the building to greet Celine.

"Oh Celine, it has been so long since you last visited!"

At the same time, a grey mole jumped out from a human-sized mushroom and lifted its claw, greeting Celine.

The grey mole was the size of a boy and had sparkling bright eyes brimming with liveliness. It had a spotlessly white moustache that dropped down from the bottom of its mouth to the floor.

"Nice to meet you, Grandpa Cedric!"

Celine expressed with respect, "I brought your favourite berries!"

Celine carefully placed the two strange fruits that looked like green dates on the ground.

"En! Not bad! That's my favourite!" The gigantic mole used its agile claws to pick up the fruits and threw them into its mouth, crunching noisily,

"This is my newly recruited famous professor, Leylin Farlier! He will be having the same level of authority as me!" Celine introduced, after the

mole finished eating.

“Leylin what?” The mole took a good look at Leylin with beaming eyes. “En! Deep and immeasurable power! Looks like you have pinned all your hopes on him...:”

Leylin looked at the mole, “ A guard animal? It has the strength of a rank 1 Magus. Not bad.”

At this time, Celine introduced to Leylin, “ Grandpa Cedric was Nature’s Alliance’s guardian during my great great grandmother’s time. He is usually very gentle, just don’t disturb his sleep...”

After introducing the two to each other, Celine brought Leylin to a hall.

There were tens of acolytes waiting in there. Seated at the front were Obo and Ilya whom Leylin previously met.

“To think that a Magus guild will end up with only a rank 1 Magus, an animal as a gatekeeper and a few apprentices. What a failure!”

Leylin became speechless as he followed Celine in.

Celine went forward and introduced Leylin to the acolytes, “This is Professor Leylin whom I’ve invited over! From now, all of you need to respect him like how you respect me. No, you all should treat him with even more respect, do you all hear me?”

“Professor Leylin!” The acolyte greeted with their beaming eyes.

Leylin’s past achievements slowly spread around through Obo and Ilya. The apprentices felt extremely happy and elated knowing that they have a rank 1 Magus taking charge.

“Nice to meet all of you! A Magus is a follower of the truth. I hope to see all of you in the hall in the future!”

Leylin spoke a few words and indicated Celine to let the students leave.

All along, Leylin did not like such situations and furthermore, he was not interested in the group of acolytes.

The sole purpose of gathering the students was to introduce Leylin. The

introduction ended within minutes, leaving Celine and Leylin in the hall after the students left.

“Can we talk now? Seems like something was wrong before I left the icy cave.”

Leylin took a glance at Celine as he asked with a smile.

“I can’t seem to hide anything from you!” Celine bit her lips and finally made up her mind.

Chapter 330: Joint Conference

“Do you know about the joint conference of the eastern guilds?”

Celine asked.

“Joint conference?” Leylin repeated. In the Twilight Zone, there was a parliamentary system, but it was simply a compromise between all the large and small organisations.

One would be able to understand just by taking these words literally. Besides, Aaron had also information about this in his memories.

“My apologies! I’ve been wandering in the borders of the regions and I don’t know much about this. I’ve heard something, though. Isn’t it a conference where multiple guilds segregate their rankings and profits?”

Leylin answered.

“Exactly!” Celine’s wry smile became more prominent. “The joint alliance is a grand occasion for the Magi in the eastern capital. Every twenty years, all the guilds in the eastern capital will gather. Nine council members will, in their capacity as hosts, mediate all conflicts, conduct another election, and divide territories.”

“Even the rating of guilds will be decided during this joint conference! As long as they are not large-scale guilds, all can apply, and after some inspections, territories will be redistributed, with more benefits... The guilds that do not meet the requirements to hold their ratings will be demoted, and the territories they hold and most of their rewards are transferred to other new guilds.”

“So, what you wanted to ask me concerns this rating!” Leylin pondered while looking at Celine.

“Yes, my lord!” Celine bit her lips.

“Because of my mentor, Nature’s Alliance’s rating during the previous joint conference was that of a small-scale guild. My strength is inferior to my mentor’s, so my ranking will cause us to fall till we aren’t even rated. In this case, most of our benefits have to be given away, and since we can’t

enroll many acolytes, Nature's Alliance will eventually die out."

Through Celine's explanation, Leylin had a better understanding of the rating system.

Generally, there were four rankings. They were the unranked, small-scale, middle-scale and large-scale guilds!

From Leylin's perspective, as long as there was one official Magus in the guild, they would be unranked. Most guilds in Twilight Zone had this rating.

Above that was the small-scaled guilds like Nature's Alliance. They possessed specific areas where they made profits, such as the icy caves, and there were usually a few official Magi or even semi-converted Magi taking charge.

There were then the middle-scale guilds. Not considering other details, at the bare minimum, they needed to have a peak rank 1 Magus.

In large-scale guilds, they were the elite guilds with rank 2 Magi in charge. Since the establishment of the joint conference, there were only a handful of instances where guilds were rated to be large-scale. Every time this happened, there would be a huge revolution involving the deaths of countless Magi.

The evaluation was not necessary to be in tandem with a Magi's rank, as battle power differs even within a rank itself.

Hence, the ratings relied entirely on battle power! They would usually exchange hands with others of the same rank, and the shedding of blood on the battlefield was not uncommon.

Of course, there was another method. As long as one submitted research material that the nine council members approved of, one could also be rated according to the merits of the research. However, this was an extremely difficult process, and few had passed through the rating review using this method.

Celine's mentor was said to be astonishingly powerful. Though he had yet to become a semi-converted Magus, he had somehow drawn a tie with

a semi-converted Magus and had thus been thought to have an equivalent level of strength. Nature's Alliance had thus been acknowledged to be a small-scale guild and received permits to estates and mines.

If their rating went down this year, all of these would naturally be revoked, and without these resources, Celine alone would not be able to continue managing the Nature's Alliance. Hence, she had no choice but to look for outside help.

However, a semi-converted Magus was already considered an elite within the ranks of rank 1 Magi. At most, they would have been groomed by other organisations.

Though Celine had attracted the attention of a few official Magi, some of whom were inferior to her, with the allure of her body, what use was it? The rest were like Skrill who had some ulterior motives, and Celine didn't dare to make use of them.

Leylin's appearance gave Celine a sliver of hope.

"As long as my lord agrees to lead us in the joint conference, everything in Nature's Alliance will belong to you, including myself!" Celine slowly took off her coat, revealing her delicate body.

Under the translucent light that shone on her pale, exquisite skin, she was even more alluring. Along with that expression of one preparing to die for her cause, it made one have the desire to ravage her.

"But why me? If these are the conditions, I believe there are many Magi, such as Skrill, who are willing."

Leylin was expressionless. Women were merely for him to cope with stress. Sex was not anything special after he performed it one too many times.

"If I'm going to sell myself, I'm obviously going to sell it to someone more powerful. Skrill had been a candidate, but he was already responsible for another guild, and his appearance is a little too strange."

Celine's answer was direct and very practical.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

Leylin applauded. “Intelligent! Rational! Able to see the big picture! Fine. I’ll go to the joint conference with you!”

“In that case, I’m yours now, my lord!”

A blush appeared on Celine’s cheeks...

.....

The next day, with Celine guiding, Leylin strolled around the headquarters of Nature’s Alliance. He then went straight to the library and did not emerge from it.

As for indulging in pleasures of the flesh? Leylin merely satisfied his needs every once in awhile. He could resist it during such crucial times.

Celine naturally understood this. After seeing Leylin in a hurry to pounce and start flipping through the books, she tactfully retreated.

Leylin watched her back and nodded. He was quite satisfied with this woman—she was rational, smart, and rather pretty.

“A.I. Chip, record!” He ordered silently, his eyes flashing with blue light.

After all, Nature’s Alliance was a Magus guild. There were thousands of books gathered in the library, including information about the culture, geography, and politics in the Twilight Zone, amongst other information. More importantly, there was an account of the Magus World.

These were all things that Leylin now lacked. As such, he did not restrain himself at all and ordered the A.I. Chip to record everything.

As time passed, the database in Leylin’s A.I. Chip was enriched. He now had a very profound understanding of the Twilight Zone.

Leylin proceeded further in, and even browsed in a few of the secret libraries within Nature’s Alliance.

Some of these areas were forbidden territories and acolytes were not allowed to enter. However, he was now a famed professor in Nature’s Alliance. After agreeing to Celine’s request, he basically had control of this

area, and there was no issue at all.

The items in the secret rooms obviously held more precious things than what was displayed in the public areas.

Not only was there large amounts of research data, there was also information from Magi expeditions, regarding meditation techniques, reserves of high-grade content and even some conjectures by senior Magi.

To be honest, at Leylin's level, general research materials and information were not much to him.

What he really cared about were the hypotheses and speculations of the senior Magi.

Though a lot of them were proven wrong by the A.I. Chip's calculations, they could still provide some new ways of thinking for Leylin.

In addition, there were differences between the studies in the subterranean world and in the south coast. The essence of these differences was worthy enough for Leylin to use as a reference.

"Hm?"

At this moment, Leylin had unintentionally flipped to a page that held research material that he was interested in.

"The maintenance and mending of the sea of consciousness!"

This was a very old scroll. It was a volume formed of leaves strung together, with information recorded on it using images and words, and it had an aura of nature.

What was written down had left Leylin astonished.

His sea of consciousness had been injured while using the ancient teleportation spell formation, and even the edges had cracks.

The A.I. Chip could only give the suggestion of solidifying spiritual force and slowly mend it.

Hence, Leylin was now unable to use part of his spiritual force, and only had the strength of a peak rank 1 Magus.

Though this was effective, it was just too slow.

After two years of recuperation in the town, his injuries had recovered by just a small amount. Leylin was getting impatient and was seeking a way to accelerate this process.

“A.I. Chip, record this information and analyse the feasibility of this method for me.”

The sea of consciousness was linked to the roots of Magi and Warlocks. Leylin did not dare act without caution.

[Beep! Information has been recorded, setting up a simulation model.]
[Beep! Effectiveness on Host body: 12.92%.] The A.I. Chip quickly arrived at a conclusion.

“So low?” Leylin was in disbelief, and could only force a laugh. One’s sea of consciousness differed from person to person, and it was only natural that the mending method had such an effect.

“But it’s a good thing that it works. I’ll gather more information on this topic and let the A.I. Chip design a treatment plan based on the state of my body. The rate of success will then increase!”

Leylin comforted himself.

The books in the secret rooms did not have information on just this topic.

A lot of the information here was useless or even harmful to acolytes but was extremely useful for Leylin.

He had even found a notebook with reflections concerning the use of rank 2 spells. It seemed to have been written by a great Magus.

Nature’s Alliance was merely a small guild, and there had never been a rank 2 Magus here. He wondered where they had obtained this from.

But Leylin accepted this with a smile. This notebook could supplement the rank 2 spell models that he had received from Celine.

Chapter 331: Remodeling By Freezing

In the Nature's Alliance's laboratory.

Leylin stared at the large ice mountain, his expression revealing his regret.

Around the ice mountain were numerous crystals that were emitting blue light that constantly swept across the ice mountain. They formed a spell formation, and the blue light.

[Failure of simulating icy radiation. Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor's life force is gradually weakening.]

The A.I. Chip intoned with no emotion.

Bang! All of a sudden, the crystals emitting blue light exploded, and the rays from the spell formation dimmed.

"Is it still a failure?" Leylin sighed.

This was the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor that he had taken captive. Ever since he had brought it from the icy caves, it had been constantly weakening. This was even happening while it was in its frozen state, or else it would have long since died.

Leylin had no other ideas. After multiple failures while trying to simulate the special radiation from the icy world, he had already given up on this idea and was preparing to make use of this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor as much as he could.

"It's impossible to extract an ancient bloodline from it, and I've already recorded all the information I've obtained from its blood. So..."

Leylin shifted his gaze to the back of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor. The rune of a distorted woman's face seemed to be alive.

Through the memories in its bloodline, Leylin knew that this type of Icy Jade Scorpion originated from the Scorpion Man that had the might of a Morning Star Magus.

The moment Scorpion Man had been drawn into the spatial crack, a

drop of the female giant's blood landed on his back.

From then on, the Scorpion Man's bloodline was tainted by the blood of a higher ranking being.

The descendants of the Scorpion Man all had this rune on their backs.

Strictly speaking, the rune on the back of the Icy Jade Scorpion was just a projection of the power of the female giant's bloodline.

However, just a projection and the wail it let out was enough to almost catch Leylin in an illusion.

In addition, the bloodlines of these higher ranked creatures all possessed incredible might even if there was just an aura of it left.

"A.I. Chip, how's the analysis on this fear-inducing rune?"

Leylin asked.

[Analysis complete. Obtained freezing and healing runes that are incomplete at 45%. Able to make a cross reference with 31% of the information with the wailing banshee] The A.I. Chip intoned.

"Huh?" Leylin was surprised. "Looks like the innate ability of the Icy Jade Scorpion to freeze and heal itself was affected by and formed from the blood of the female giant."

He suddenly had a thought that would exploit the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor to the fullest.

"If I combine that information about the technique to mend my sea of consciousness with the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor's innate skill, burning through its bloodline and stimulating the abilities of the runes on its back to form a bloodline imprint that can be used once..."

Leylin's eyes shone blue as he calculated, "In that case, I can also use this freezing ability once, and its effects will even be amplified. The power of the bloodline inside would be enough to mend the damage to my sea of consciousness."

Using solidified spiritual force could do this as well, but it took far too long. In addition to this, Leylin wanted to regain his strength as a rank 2

Warlock as soon as possible.

“Freezing” was a unique innate talent of the Icy Jade Scorpions. While heavily injured, they could protect themselves in a thick layer of ice. Not only was it an ultimate defence, it could also help heal injuries.

Now, Leylin wanted to use this ability on himself.

“A.I. Chip, what is the feasibility of this idea?” Leylin immediately asked in his mind.

Large amounts of information and graphics flashed, and the A.I. Chip gave an answer. [Feasibility is at 87%. Host body first needs to undergo changes in order to be able to tolerate icy radiation.]

“As expected, it’s possible!” Leylin’s eyes exhibited his joy.

The innate freezing ability of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor, as well as the slight projection of the power from an ancient bloodline, was definitely able to repair the sea of consciousness of a rank 2 Warlock.

This was the optimal method to make use of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor.

After all, Leylin already had a lot of materials from the Icy Jade Scorpions. Besides, how could materials from another world be more important than his own strength?

“En! In that case, I should start making some preparations.”

Leylin glanced at the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor in the ice mountain. Covered in a block of ice, this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor looked more fantastical, the green on its body looked almost alive.

Only the weakening of its life force and breath showed that it did not have long to live.

“A.I. Chip, prepare the Bloodline Ignition Potion. It’s essential to make some preparations.”

Leylin’s eyes glinted coldly.

To completely make use of the freezing innate ability of the Icy Jade

Scorpion Emperor, it was necessary to burn up all its blood completely and stimulate the fear-inducing rune on its back. Then, one needed to model it into a freezing bloodline rune, which involved a very complicated process.

However, all these preparations needed to start from somewhere. This was to ensure that this Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor could live through this, and secondly that Leylin himself could adapt to the harsh cold while in the frozen state.

.....

Three days later, in the laboratory.

“Leylin, may I enter?” Celine’s voice could be heard from outside.

“I’ve already undone the alarm spell formation. Come in.” She promptly heard Leylin’s answer and did not hesitate as she pushed the door to enter.

“This...” The moment she entered, Celine instinctively wrapped her clothes tightly around her.

Within the laboratory, large amounts of mist was everywhere. There was even a thick layer of frost on the surrounding walls and some instruments.

Meanwhile, Leylin was naked in a giant glass tank.

He was soaking in a blue icy liquid that seemed to be seeping into his body bit by bit, turning him a little blue.

“What are you doing?”

Celine had long since gotten used to Leylin’s naked body, and she naturally approached him without flushing red. She judged the trough and was puzzled.

She found this icy aura very familiar.

“Isn’t this the unique radiation of the icy caves?” All of a sudden, Celine thought of its origins.

“No, this is just an imitation. It isn’t even 50% of the original, and can’t keep an Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor alive.”

Leylin breathed in deeply, and the icy blue colour in the tank faded,

turning from a dark blue to a lighter one, to the point that it was slightly translucent.

Over ten seconds passed, and the icy liquid in the trough had turned translucent.

Leylin stood up and walked out at this point.

Celine had prepared a towel and began to dry the droplets of water on his body like a caring wife.

“What do you plan to do to the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor?” Celine enquired.

“We’re both going to go to the joint conference of the guilds in the east capital. When that happens, only Grandpa Cedric will be here, and it can’t deal with an Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor with the strength of a peak rank 1 Magus!”

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of it by then.”

Leylin was overjoyed.

Through the tempering of his body with the icy radiation over these few days, he had gradually gotten used to such a chilly temperature. With a few more remodelling attempts, he would be able to make use of the freezing innate ability of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor without any residual effects on himself to treat his injuries.

Of course, he would not mention this to Celine. She was an intelligent woman who knew what could and couldn’t be asked.

“Do you need clothes?”

After dressing Leylin, Celine rested her head on Leylin’s shoulder, her nimble little tongue licking at Leylin’s earlobes and silently hinting at something.

“Of course not!”

Leylin laughed and pressed her down...

A warm breeze blew, causing one to have the urge to take a nap.

In the subterranean world, the humans of Twilight Zone could not divide the year into four seasons. They had only two ways of detecting the current season. One was based on the activity of the planet's crust, and dividing the year into the cold and warm season. Another way was through specific crops, and dividing it into the planting and harvesting seasons.

Such a warm breeze was the most obvious indication that it was the warm season.

Leylin sat on the back of a horse carriage with Celine by his side. An aromatic, crisp smell travelled over from Celine's hair, causing Leylin to feel slightly restless.

The people driving the carriage were the two level 3 acolytes, Obo and Ilya.

Within all of Nature's Alliance, these two were the ones who were somewhat able to do this.

The animals used to pull the carriage were obviously not horses, but an animal found underground—Wildebeests!

These animals were a lot larger than normal horses. They also had bony armour, and what was most obvious was the single horn on its head.

These animals were more patient than horses, they could also withstand some amount of radiation, and were the first choice for light Magi of the Twilight Zone when they went out on expeditions.

Of course, they were only useful for ordinary acolytes and Magi.

As for even more powerful Magi, they were naturally able to tame even more ferocious, mystical creatures, or even top-grade pets while they went on their journeys.

For a small guild like Nature's Alliance, using a Wildebeests showed how hard pressed they were.

However, they had no choice. After Celine took over, Nature's Alliance had not been in a good state and had been pressured in many areas. Based

on the intel she received, there was a large possibility that the Nature's Alliance would be demoted from its rating in the joint conference.

In this situation, Celine had no choice but to look for external help. She could only turn to Leylin.

Though Leylin had been said to be a famed professor in name only, Celine had been tactful and given most of the authority in Nature's Alliance to him. Leylin wouldn't turn down such a large gift as well.

He also needed help from the other organisations for his upcoming plans. He had wanted to help Nature's Alliance expand and assist them based on the agreement they had.

However, it was also not a bad idea to take over this organisation.

Leylin thought to himself as he eyed Celine, who looked calm.

Chapter 332: Notta Highlands

“Have you made inquiries about this already?”

Leylin asked Celine, who was at the side.

“Based on intel from a few close friends, the person targeting us at this joint conference is Skrill of the Eight-Clawed Spiders!” Celine smoothed her hair out, revealing her pale neck. One could also see her well-developed chest.

“Skrill? That spider man?” Leylin turned a blind eye to Celine’s unintended seduction. The Crystal Mask that Celine trained in had a special effect, in which the Magus would unwittingly bewitch the people around them.

This was not very effective on a semi-converted Magus, and even less so on Leylin.

“He’s merely a semi-converted Magus. With a few helpers, you’d be able to take care of him, right?”

Leylin glanced at Celine.

“If it was only him, I could somewhat contend against by using some help my mentor left me, but...”

Celine’s eyebrows showed her gloominess at this. “There seems to be another power supporting Skrill..”

“I see!” Leylin nodded.

“Of course, all I hope for is that my lord maintains the Nature’s Alliance’s current standing. Celine has no wish for anything more.” As if afraid Leylin would change his mind halfway through, she quickly spoke and clarified herself.

“Don’t worry. Since I’ve already agreed, you can trust me.”

Leylin didn’t pay any attention to whoever was working behind the scenes.

The bloodline imprint of the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was completed,

and once his body could adapt to the icy radiation, he could regain his strength as a rank 2 Warlock!

A rank 2 Warlock, and especially one like Leylin with a powerful bloodline, had a strength that far exceeded that of a regular rank 2 Magus.

Whatever Nature's Alliance had, it wasn't enough for a rank 2 to covet it, was it?

"A.I. Chip! How much longer will it take until my body adapts to the icy radiation?"

Leylin closed his eyes and asked.

[Beep! Based on the current data on Host body, estimated time left: 56h 34min.]

The A.I. Chip quickly gave an answer.

"Two days later, which is after the joint conference ends?" Leylin muttered to himself and then checked his stats again.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 21.1, Agility: 14.4, Vitality: 27.9, Spiritual force: 79, Magic power: 79 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force).]

After so many days of hard work and treatment using all sorts of potions, he could only draw out a small amount of his solidified spiritual force. This was not enough to break through the bottleneck of rank 1.

This strengthened Leylin's resolve to use the freezing innate ability. If not, who knew how much longer it would take for him to regain his strength as a rank 2 Magus!

"After mending my sea of consciousness, my battle power will be even more powerful than it had been on the south coast since I'm no longer affected by my emotional instability..." Leylin calculated in his mind.

"I look forward to it!"

In the icy caves, with the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor's Breath, as well as its Icy Jade Scorpion's bodies, he had thoroughly eliminated the issue of emotional instability.

However, this was not a complete elimination. Perhaps after he advanced to a higher rank, the chaos and tyranny in his bloodline and genes would explode forth once more.

However, with the detections by the A.I. Chip, Leylin was sure that while he was a rank 2 or even rank 3 Warlock, the emotional instability would not affect him.

Getting rid of this issue, he now possessed all the advantages of being a warlock with an ancient bloodline with no disadvantages at all. How much more power could he display?

When strength and intelligence were combined, there was nothing that could hinder a Warlock in a pursuit of the truth.

“My lord, what’s on your mind?”

Celine leaned over.

“Nothing much!” Leylin tugged her into his lap, a hand slipping down while following the curves of her waist.

“M-my lord, not here. Outside—there are people outside!”

Celine blushed, rejecting Leylin’s embrace.

Outside, Obo and Ilya outside ducked their heads in embarrassment. All the thoughts they had died down after seeing the strength that Leylin flaunted every once in a while.

.....

Notta Highlands. The ground in this desolate area was filled with a white quartz gravel.

Usually, this place would be filled with creatures of the darkness, but they had now left the area.

At the heart of the Notta Highlands, a bright ball of light that spanned for around ten metres was hanging in mid-air like a little sun, emitting light and warmth.

Under it gathered Magi of different tribes who looked different and wore

clothes of various colours.

Even if it was just passive radiation and energy fluctuations that were emitted, the gathering of so many Magi forced the creatures to avoid them.

After all, this was still within the eastern capital of the Twilight Zone, and not a place for the creatures to flaunt their prowess. Any Magi that was stronger than them, could exterminate all the higher ranked darkness creatures.

However, if this was outside the Twilight Zone, where human activity was low, the situation would be reversed.

The creatures of the darkness had an absolute advantage based on their numbers. There would even appear formidable creatures that could rival a Magus, which would encircle and annihilate Magi.

“Lu lu!”

Meanwhile, another horse carriage bringing a few Magi passed through. The Horned Horse pulling the carriage seemed to sense the strength of the Magi, and neighed in worry.

The Magi merely shot a glance at this area. Upon finding out that it was a small-scaled guild, they promptly lost interest and continued along their way.

However, there were a few Magi that exchanging glances in secret, staring at the carriage without even blinking.

Rattle!

Obo and Ilya respectfully opened the door to the carriage, bowing as they welcomed the two professors inside.

Celine alighted first, her face unusually flushed and clothes slightly untidy. However, she soon regained her calm.

“That’s quite a lot of Magi!”

Leylin also descended from the carriage, scanning the area and commenting with a smile.

He had sensed the aura of large amounts of energy while on the carriage, and now, using his naked eyes, he knew that there were at least 400 official Magi gathered here.

This was no small number, and these were merely the representatives from various large organisations. They still had much more guards than their headquarters.

Only Celine, whose guild was about to fall apart, would come with the full power of her guild, leaving no one behind to protect the headquarters.

These 400 Magi seemed to intentionally cause pressure on the area, the radiation from their bodies slowly yet steadily emitting, and even causing the land here to have a different smell.

“Four hundred nuclear reactors piled together, exposing all their strength. If this happened in my previous world, it would be a huge issue!”

Leylin’s lips curved up in a grin.

“But upon closer inspection, there are still some differences between Magi in the subterranean world and in the south coast.”

Leylin observed and thought.

As there was less light, or perhaps because they had never been under the sun for a long period of time, the Magi in Twilight Zone were paler.

In terms of clothing style, there was a large variety. There were even some bizarre Magi who were completely naked and did not have any clothing on their skins.

Some nature-elemental Magi advocated being in harmony with nature and felt that clothes would interfere with this process. Hence, they had this strange behaviour. Though this was not acknowledged by many Magi, this was a matter of principle, and for this reason, others could not oppose this logic.

Leylin also found another point. These Magi did not have any distinctions such as light and dark Magi.

Black and white robes were merely the formal attire of the Magi here.

There was no special meaning.

He saw many Magi donning black and white robes joking together, and it didn't seem like they were going to attack each other.

"Perhaps the distinction between light and dark Magi is a situation unique to the south coast!"

Upon seeing this scene, Leylin's eyes flashed.

"My beloved Celine, it's been about a year since we had last met, yes?"

At this moment, an upper-class woman wearing clothing filled with gems and tassels, looking as if she were about to attend a ballroom dance party at a palace, approached them, greeting with a smile.

"This is Mistress Sache of the Obsidian Throne guild. She's a good friend, as well as an ally of our guild!" Celine explained in Leylin's ear and then proceeded to press her cheek to Mistress Sache's as a greeting.

"Hello, Mistress Sache! This is the famed professor of our guild, Mister Leylin!" Celine introduced him to Mistress Sache."

"Hello!"

Mistress Sache looked Leylin up and down, her eyes glimmering with curiosity.

"I remember that with the conditions of your Nature's Alliance, as well as permission of the joint conference, you could only recruit one famed professor, right? It looks like Celine is betting everything on you!"

Leylin also observed this Mistress Sache.

Along the journey the conference, Celine had given Leylin a simple introduction to this ally guild, the Obsidian Throne.

Mistress Sache was very tall, and her nose was pointed. Paired with her blue eyes, she gave off a unique feeling that was similar to the European style in Leylin's previous world.

"I will do my best, Mistress Sache!"

Leylin was naturally aware that though there had been precedents of

finding outside help for the joint conference, things still had to go according to the rules.

A small-scale guild like Nature's Alliance could, at most, allow one person to vie for their ranking under the name of a famed professor.

How did one tell which guild they were from? This was actually very simple. Just by looking at the high-grade meditation technique the Magus cultivated in would make everything clear.

After advancing to become an official Magus, high-grade meditation techniques produced different effects that made them easy to distinguish between.

Chapter 333: Killing Intent

The only high-grade meditation technique in the Nature's Alliance, the Crystal Mask, had been recorded by Leylin. It was a technique based on illusions that used energy from plants as supplements. There were merely two levels to it.

As specific materials required to advance to the second level were only able to be acquired from another world, there had never been another rank 2 Magus in the entire history of Nature's Alliance.

Leylin possessed the Kemoyin's Pupil, and had already confirmed his path as a Warlock. Naturally, he wouldn't change his meditation technique.

As a result, with one glance, outsiders would be able to tell that he was not a Magus trained by Nature's Alliance.

Based on the rules at the joint conference, Magi like himself were able to make an appearance, but small-scaled guilds could only choose one such Magus, and the chosen Magus could not be changed.

"Dont worry, I have faith in Leylin!" Celine said confidently.

Leylin appeared to be a peak rank 1 Magus. This kind of strength was a equivalent to a medium-scaled guild's trump card. Naturally, Celine wasn't very worried.

"Is that so? That's great!" Mistress Sache covered her lips with a black foldable fan, and smiled coquettishly.

"What? Did you receive some information too?" Upon seeing her reaction, Celine immediately set up a soundproof barrier around the three of them.

"Yes! I received intelligence from my boy toys. Skrill of the Eight-Clawed Spider Guild seems to harbour unkind intentions towards you. Moreover, he has the support of a medium-scaled guild called the Dense Fog Forest!"

After saying that, Mistress Sache looked at Leylin and said, "And they seem to have made preparations against you, an external support."

“Medium-scaled guild! Dense Fog Forest!” Sure enough, Celine’s face registered a slight change.

These medium-scaled guilds possessed at least one peak rank 1 Magus as their trump card. The number of official Magi and their knowledge greatly surpassed that of Nature’s Alliance. How could this not worry Celine?

“Is there anything valuable enough inside Nature’s Alliance that the Dense Fog Forest guild is coveting?”

Leylin immediately wondered.

Being a medium-scaled guild, Dense Fog Forest guild possessed resources and minerals that Nature’s Alliance could not compare with. Furthermore, even if the Nature’s Alliance were to fall to an unrated guild, the Dense Fog Forest guild might not be the one that would gain control of their territory and resources.

“So the Dense Fog Forest has to be allies with the Eight-Clawed Spider. Once the Nature’s Alliance falls and loses its seat within the guild alliance, Eight-Clawed Spider would be able to take over its resources. With a little more edging from the Dense Fog Forest, the council of the alliance would not hesitate to hand the empty seat over to them.

“What resources do the Nature’s Alliance and Eight-Clawed Spider have in common? Only one! The icy cave!”

Leylin needed just a bit of time to understand the nature of this power struggle.

As long as one found out who the beneficiaries, or those indirectly gaining benefits were, the situation would then be made clear.

After all, nobody would be willing to do thankless jobs.

During this period of time, Leylin had somewhat gotten familiar with the resources Nature’s Alliance possessed. Honestly speaking, these resources weren’t valuable enough for Dense Fog Forest to be interested in.

The only possibility for this was that the secrets within the depths of the icy cave had been exposed!

“In the past, the icy cave had only been an area rich in production of frozen materials, with the Icy Jade Scorpion as a specialty. It isn’t that valuable, which is why it was allocated to Nature’s Alliance. However, within the cave’s depths actually lies an icy world of a larger scale. The icy world even has the remains of a creature with the strength of a Morning Star Magus and a drop of blood from an even more powerful bloodline!”

After obtaining the information held within the Icy Jade Scorpion’s bloodline, nobody could be more knowledgeable about the icy cave than Leylin. Bluntly speaking, this was a big treasure trove, especially for a bloodline Warlock!

Leylin’s eyes sparkled, with a tinge of chilliness within.

“Only benefits like this would be valuable enough for Dense Fog Forest to act secretly. Looking at the situation, information about these benefits has not been spread. If it was, the entire Twilight Zone would have been in an uproar, and numerous Magi would have formed groups to explore it.”

“Celine, Please ask around and find out how the Oaken Leaf Guild and Emerald Vine Guild been doing lately.”

Leylin ordered Celine suddenly.

“Yes, my lord!” Celine straightened her body and walked over to a corner. The runes from the secret imprint on her body continuously brightened. Thereafter, she returned, a worried expression on her face.

“They have all received Skrill’s invitation. His influence is now similar to a spider web, extending to these two guilds...”

“Just as I thought...” Leylin sighed.

This was the final point of confirmation.

Right now, Leylin was certain that the Dense Fog Forest must have found out about the Icy Cave’s uncanniness, and decided to bribe the Eight-Clawed Spider to crowd out other guilds so that they could monopolise the entire icy cave!

“Find an opportunity to kill them!”

The flash in Leylin's eyes caused Celine to be nervous, as if an ancient monster was seated beside her.

Currently, Leylin had impolitely claimed the entire icy world. Should the Dense Fog Forest dare tread on his property, he would not let them off easily.

“Actually, if we just want to resolve the crisis Nature's Alliance is facing, there's a better way, which is to reveal the secret of the Icy Cave! Even Dense Fog Forest cannot oppose the entire Twilight Zone. Under the pressure of the joint conference, the Dense Fog Forest would be akin to an ant that could easily be crushed. However, this would not be in my best interests!”

With Leylin's strength, he could probably gain benefits merely by following the majority of the Magi, but there was just too much uncertainty.

Should those overpowered Rank 3 Magi be lured out, Leylin did not have confidence that he could snatch anything from them.

If that were the case, he would only get the leftovers, and that would truly be a pity.

Not to mention, should the Twilight Zone still have the presence of Morning Star Magi that could destroy the entire icy world, Leylin would definitely be reduced to tears.

As a result, for Leylin, it was best to let the secret of the Icy Cave Guild stay a secret until he advanced to become a Morning Star Magus. He would later then return and reap all the benefits!

“But... If that's the case! The Dense Fog Forest would have to be eliminated, and that needs to be done fast before their leader has the time to react!”

In his heart, Leylin had already meted the death penalty to Dense Fog Forest and Eight-Clawed Spider.

With just a few thoughts, Leylin had already roughly understood the gist of the problem.

To him, since this possibility was the greatest, he would rather kill the wrong person than to not let the matter go. Dense Fog Forest and Eight-Clawed spider needed to be eradicated, and he would even be able to conveniently seize their high-grade meditation techniques and collection.

What was more wonderful was that this could be done in the name of revenge for Nature's Alliance, which would be killing two birds with one stone.

While pondering, Leylin emanated a massive spiritual force with traces of killing intent, which caused Celine to retreat. Even Mistress Sache gave an excuse and walked away.

"What happened?" Celine worriedly asked.

Naturally, she didn't know that with merely a word or two, Leylin had managed to deduce the truth, which had helped him make the decision to kill.

"Nothing much!" Leylin smiled, hiding the truth from her.

For interests of such a huge scale, Leylin did not feel at ease revealing his plans to others, even to Celine, whom he had gone to bed with!

"I'm thinking about what Mistress Sache said about her boy toys. What did she mean?"

Leylin cleverly changed the topic.

"Boy... toys?" Celine's face changed, and she replied: "You-you know, some Magi may have strange interests and bizarre hobbies. Mistress Sache has sadistic tendencies and is also skilled in this area, so..."

"Oh! Sadism and masochism? I know!"

A look of understanding flashed in Leylin's expression, but he then rolled his eyes. There really were all sorts of Magi.

"Leylin... Are you skilful in things like that?"

After some moments, Celine returned to Leylin's side and asked shyly.

"Don't worry!" Leylin replied matter-of-factly.

Since the culprit had been identified to be merely a medium-scaled guild, Leylin didn't have anything to fear. What he was concerned with was how he had to proceed in order to prevent higher ranked Magi from interfering.

It was at this moment that a commotion arose among the Magi; they dispersed in two directions, revealing a line of people.

"The nine council members are here!"

Celine whispered to Leylin.

"Hm?" Leylin stared at the nine Magi walking over.

There were both male and female council members, but they were no longer young. Their hair was white, and many of them wore glasses. They held dictionary-like books and feather pens or scales, and their eyes glistened with wisdom, giving them a scholarly aura.

However, their energy fluctuations left Leylin dumbfounded.

"Peak rank one! Peak rank one! Peak rank one! They are all peak rank one! How... weak."

Leylin rolled his eyes. "The subterranean world only possesses this much strength?"

Honestly speaking, if these nine council members only had this much strength, using Toxic Bile before he had gotten injured would have resulted in the instant death of these nine council members. He would even have killed or injured the surrounding Magi as well.

"What is going on?"

Looking at the surrounding Magi paying their respects to the nine council members, Leylin pondered.

"Looking at the situation, either the subterranean Magi have flaws that make it hard for them to advance, or the higher rank Magi have a more intimate circle, and hence do not participate in the conferences of us rank one Magi..."

Leylin stroked his chin, "Whatever it is, I have to reevaluate the strength

of Magi in Twilight Zone!”

Chapter 334: The Fallen City

“Since everybody has gathered, then I can begin the announcement! Let the 325th Eastern Region Magi joint conference begin!”

After looking around, the council member in the middle immediately spoke.

Even though his voice was not loud, he could be heard by every Magus present.

Once he spoke, the books, calligraphy brushes, weighing scales, and the other items in the arms of the nine enforces immediately emitted faint rays of white light that floated in the air.

“I summon the Fallen City!!!”

Nine rays of light shot out from the books and other materials in a flash and converged into a big white sun.

Boom!

The tall pagoda violently shook and a big crack from the abyss opened.

The Magi looked very calm during this kind of disastrous earthquake and only used their powers to protect themselves and their apprentices, as well as their luggage, horses, and so on.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A few huge stone statues suddenly broke through the ground floor, emerging like tall mountains that cast large shadows on the surface.

“These are the Twilight Zone’s ancient Magi: Ignis, Nikolat, and Morfe.”

As this was happening, Celine casually introduced the Magi joint conference to Leylin.

Since ancient times, the joint conference was not just organized by anybody but fixed in this location.

In the legends, the Fallen City was an ancient city to consecrate the Ancient Magi.

The nine huge stone statues in the middle were in fact the nine most famous Magi in the ancient times.

As a matter of fact, the nine Magi of the joint conference were also emulating these few Magi.

Crash!

Big chunks of stone fell, like how bamboo shoots fall off in springtime when it rains

A piece of solid stone beneath Leylin lifted him up as it rose to the last position at the top.

Leylin looked around.

The Magi were now seated exactly in the center of the Fallen City.

The entire building appeared similar to the ancient Colosseum of Rome, just like what the people of ancient Greece practiced. The circle of outdoor seats surrounded the middle area.

Outside the conference, twelve slim, spotless marble pillars glistened in the sunlight and appeared to support both heaven and earth.

“The joint conference controlled the way to summon the Fallen City. It’s a pity that we cannot find any materials related to the end of the war... or a single living creature. Otherwise, we can restore the glory of the ancient Magi....”

Celine, who was beside Leylin, gasped in admiration.

Many Magi went to their respective places and formed a circle, surrounding the altar in the middle.

Leylin looked, the ones in the front were the middle-level Guilds, followed behind them by the low-level guilds, like him and Celine, that sat in the middle section closer to the back seats. As for the rest, the unranked guilds, they sat in the outermost section.

Each seat took up a lot of space as a suitable distance was maintained between each one, which allowed the Magi to be able to see each other without feeling restricted.

This site was enough to accommodate ten thousand people, but now there's barely a few hundred Magi. Naturally, there was ample space between each Magus.

"How were these nine council members selected?"

Leylin pulled Celine closer into his embrace, and whispered into her ear

"Each large-scaled guild would send a representative, before us Magi present voted for them!" Celine was slightly embarrassed, but she still explained it to Leylin.

"Oh! Basically, the Eastern Twilight Zone only has about nine high-leveled guilds?"

Leylin stroked his chin, this kind of strength was similar to the south coast. Only that he was unsure of the numbers of rank 3 Magi present.

But deep down he had some reservations. Although high-grade meditation techniques were widely taught and of a higher grade than in the south coast, most of them were incomplete, and needed a few special otherworldly materials for their practitioners to advance. This meant that there would be fewer higher rank magi in the Twilight Zone and they possibly would be weaker than their south coast counterparts due to the Twilight Zone being isolated from the external world.

"The first point of the conference's agenda is to observe a minute of silence in tribute of our Magi ancestors! They were true pursuers of knowledge, the founders of the the Twilight Zone!"

The nine council members in the front immediately stood up, as they solemnly and respectfully bowed their heads.

And in their hands, a pure, white flower bud slowly bloomed.

The petals of the flower bud looked like countless rays of light that created a dreamy illusion.

Immediately after, the Magi disorderly stood up to observe the minute of silence, the rays of light in their hands transformed into the shape of the white flower bud.

“This is the light daisy, a specialty of the Twilight Zone that is used to represent the recollection of the dead and our grief!”

Leylin’s eye flashed and concentrated some of his spiritual force to observe Celine’s actions.

The magic of transforming the flower was only a magic trick, one that even acolytes could easily learn. Celine’s abilities were immediately recorded by the A.I. Chip, which then provided the composition of the spell model and the spiritual force.

Zoom! Leylin followed swiftly with a layer of white light twinkling in his hands.

In a flash, numerous light daisies in the open space bloomed as formless ripples continuously circulated, and pure light rays of flower petals dispersed and spread to the sky.

A rain of petals floated down, some of them dispersed atop the sculptures of the nine ancient Magi.

“Hm?” It was at this moment that Leylin suddenly raised his head.

To his eyes, numerous petals seemed to use some form of mechanism or magic, and the nine stone statues at the heart of the center were subtly trembling.

A desolate, ancient aura filled with abundant energy surfaced in the center.

And looking at the surrounding Magi who were calm earlier on and had seized the moment to close their eyes, Leylin realized that they were actually in concentration.

Leylin also released his energy, letting his spirit and that aura connect.

Boom! Like the eruption of lava, like the coming of a tsunami wave, an intense vibration incessantly shook Leylin’s heart and at the same time, many confused thoughts crossed his mind.

“This is... a high-level meditation aura!”

Leylin gave Celine a somewhat intoxicated look, and immediately came

to his senses.

“Regarding what these Twilight Zone Magi said, they’re lacking materials only obtainable from other worlds and their meditation techniques cannot be improved, and now this aura that comes from an ancient meditation technique is to guide them on which path to follow!”

Although this acted only as a guide, there were still many benefits for a rank 1 Magus. Moreover, who knows, there might be geniuses that could use this ancient aura and be able to make modifications on their meditation techniques and skip the steps of using rare and ancient resources.

“It’s a pity! In fact, there is no ancient technique that inspires me. Furthermore, rank two Magi have already decided their path and are continuously intensifying further. So those Magi who have been promoted to the second rank also don’t look up to these...”

After waiting for the rain of petals to pass, the nine huge stone sculptures regained their tranquility and many of the Magi were then obsessed with keeping their eyes closed.

“Alright! Now to the second point of the agenda, let’s come to an agreement!”

The Magus that stood in the middle and who held the weighing scale said softly, with his voice being channeled through an unknown device, was heard by every other Magus present.

Soon after, two Magi walked up to the front and debated loudly with him, and occasionally displayed the recordings of light.

And the Magus holding the weighing scale would make his judgement after having listened to both parties.

Magi from both sides would generally accept the result, and occasionally those who did not would start to challenge each other at the center of the site.

“Can we believe this council member’s verdict?” Leylin asked Celine, who was beside him.

“Gandor the council member is a fair and wise senior, and we usually trust his judgements. Moreover, the golden weighing scale that he holds symbolizes fairness. His personal beliefs forbid from violating fairness and justice.

Celine explained softly to Leylin, “Do not ask such questions out loud, otherwise the other Magi will despise us!”

“Oh!” Leylin nodded his head indifferently.

However, he was somewhat bored looking at the issues that were discussed one by one here.

Although there are contradictions in this joint conference, he understood clearly that it was for the protection of the entire strength of the Twilight Zone’s Magi and instead of internal conflicts, we should be focusing on foreign enemies.

Humans were not the only rulers in the Twilight Zone, there were also many darkness creatures out there, just like the neighbouring elven empire beside the humans that left many intelligent beings wary of them.

But Leylin was not convinced by this concept. To him, if the Dark Magi were to come in power, they would have already started a war and would be constantly fighting. And through such bloody wars, a selection of the acolytes would be conducted. They would start off from a low-intensity battle which would then gradually increase in difficulty. In this manner, an elite force of magicians could be created!

It was not worth having such an indecisive situation.

This situation was similar to current state between the light and dark Magi.

“Leylin! It is the guild evaluation right after, you need to be careful!” Celine cautiously reminded Leylin.

“Dont worry!” Leylin replied calmly, and at this moment, two unfriendly gazes were laid on him.

Leylin’s brows furrowed as he looked at the source of discontentment.

At the seat of the Eight-clawed spider, Skrill lowered his head without delay, but his eyes had a sinister tint.

“You will never survive today’s ordeal! From today onwards, Celine is mine!”

“What trump card do you have? Or is the Dense Fog Forest going to interfere?”

Leylin remained calm, knowing that Skrill had slipped away like a beaten-up dog at the sight of him. He strongly believed that Skrill had some sort of backup to rely on.

But to Leylin, the strength of a middle-scaled guild was not enough to threaten him!

“Alright, continuing to the fifth agenda of the conference! The guilds’ evaluation” A council member declared.

In a split second, the Magi on site all looked on with eagerness and attention.

Chapter 335: Challenge

For these Magi, mediating the conflicting views from before was merely a small matter. However, the evaluation of guilds could directly affect their interests!

Hence, the atmosphere turned solemn very quickly.

Cough cough! The council member in the middle coughed lightly, and only after it quietened down did he begin to speak, "The evaluation process will go the same way as before. We will first announce the results before the evaluations are open to challenges. Each guild has, at most, three chances. Lower rated guilds can challenge higher rated guilds, but higher rated guilds are not to interfere with the lower rated guilds. Guilds of the same evaluation can challenge each other to settle any conflicts, and those who are defeated have to wait until the next time..."

Leylin found Celine stiffen from worry after hearing the council member's words.

"Even if you don't have enough strength, those resources are all given out to you by the joint conference. They're not yours in the first place, so why are you so worried?"

Leylin was a little speechless.

From his perspective, one would be able to obtain territory that was proportional to one's own strength. While Celine's mentor had still been around, there had been nothing to fear, but once Celine took over Nature's Alliance, she should have reduced the scale of the guild and given out the resources she had. That was the most sensible course of action.

This time, if not for Leylin sticking his head into the matter, things would not end well for Celine.

Of course, the situation would be vastly different with Leylin around. Furthermore, the icy caves were something Leylin needed to have, by hook or by crook.

Next, after the declaration from the council members of the start of the

event, the site began to get livelier.

Many Magi exchanged glances. Though they had many thoughts, none of them made their move right away, as if they were waiting for something.

After a long silence, a Magus in ashen robes stood out from a corner.

“We from Gulde wishes to challenge the Seaflower Society!”

“En! Gulde is an unrated guild, while the Seaflower Society is a small-scale guild. The challenge is permitted; may the Magi of both guilds enter the stage!”

A Magus wearing presbyopic glasses flipped through a thick book and nodded.

The Seaflower Society sent out an old geezer with blue hair and some strange runes on his face. His guild had been pointed out and challenged, so naturally, he was not in a good mood.

Didn't this imply that their Seaflower Society had already fallen this low?

At this thought, killing intent flashed in his eyes as he made up his mind to make this an unforgettable lesson for his opponent.

Meanwhile, the Magus in ashen robes was stupefied.

Upon waiting for the confirmation from the council member once more, two fluctuations from spells exploded at the site.

At the same time, a light-yellow dome of energy shot out from all corners, protecting the audience and council members from any stray attacks from the battle.

Leylin watched on with interest.

He wasn't very clear about the strength of the official Magi in Twilight Zone, and this was a good opportunity for him to find out.

Through the few mediations from before as well as what was currently happening, he was able to understand many things.

As subterranean Magi were faced with powerful enemy forces, there

were no scholars who solely focused on just research.

These Magi were quite formidable, and they were fast in setting up their spell models. They had also grasped the technique of the instantaneous and silent release of spells, and on average, their battle power was one level higher than that of Magi from the south coast.

In addition, most of them had grasped one or two spells with immense killing power, and they had no apprehensions about using them.

This was another characteristic of theirs that allowed them to surpass the Magi of the south coast by a large margin.

Bang!

All of a sudden, the scene of the battlefield changed.

The ashen-robed Magus waved his arm, and two large black crosses appeared, which criss crossed and pierced towards the Magus from the Seaflower Society.

“The Cross of Anginus!” The Magus from the Seaflower Society yelled out the name of this spell in fear, continuously adding a few more protective layers in front of him and evaded at a flying speed.

“Serator! You can’t escape!”

The ashen-robed Magus hissed for a long while, and his clothes split open at the back, revealing a pair of giant wings.

Whoosh! Whoosh! The black feathers on the wings were like steel, the tip revealing a luster seen on sharp objects. With the impetus from the wings, he soared into the sky.

Two grey crosses of light flew to his feet, forming something like two sets of eagle claws.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The grey figure constantly flashed, and after producing his wings, his speed increased until he almost became a shadow.

The grey figure constantly collided with the defensive layers.

Ka-cha!

The defensive layers of the Magus from the Seaflower Society seemed to produce a tearing sound before it was being completely ripped apart.

Pu! Large claws mercilessly tore at the chest of the Magus from the Seaflower Society, and the man let out a miserable cry.

Meanwhile, one could see with their naked eyes, the withering of flesh spanning out from the Magus of the Seaflower Society's wounds.

"I admit defeat!"

Before the other claw reached his body, this Magus immediately yelled.

However, a cold glint appeared in the gaze of this ashen-robed Magus, and the grey claw increased its speed by thirty percent

"That's enough!" A council member holding a scale shouted coldly, and the powerful spiritual force of a peak rank 1 Magus swept across. A brownish-yellow hand rose from the earth and protected the injured Magus from the Seaflower Society, protecting him from the attack of the ashen-robed Magus.

"My apologies, my lord! I was unable to hold back in time!"

The ashen-robed Magus descended onto the ground and removed the effects from his spells regaining his appearance as a regular human. He bowed, looking respectful.

"Hmph! Gulde's challenge was successful, so it is now promoted to be a small-scaled guild. The Seaflower Society will now be demoted a ranking and is now in the unrated category. All the resources that have been allocated to the Seaflower Group guild by the joint conference will be transferred over right away, and our council members will supervise this process."

This council member furrowed his brow and snorted, but still announced loudly.

"Many thanks, my lord!" The ashen-robed Magus bowed once more.

Meanwhile, the Magus from the Seaflower Society became deathly pale

and fainted.

Leylin, who watched on, was not too surprised. After all, since the ashen-robed Magus had taken the initiative to challenge the Seaflower Society, it was natural that he must have been confident.

After that, a few unrated guilds chose to challenge some other guilds.

Most of the challenged guilds were small-scale guilds that were declining, and almost all of the challenges were successful. Only one small-scale guild won, protecting what belonged to them.

This contest mostly happened between small-scale and unrated guilds. The medium-scale guilds rarely went onstage, and as for large-scale guilds, they were remote existences that only served as witnesses and judges.

“Dear council members, we of the Eight-Clawed Spider wish to challenge the Nature’s Alliance guild!”

Suddenly, Skrill’s voice sounded out.

“Hm?” The Magi present shifted their gazes towards him.

Usually, challenges between similarly ranked guilds rarely happened unless there was enmity between them.

As the Eight Clawed Spider Guild was already a small-scale guild, they would only cause Nature’s Alliance to lose their resources if they were victorious. What they would obtain would be meagre.

“Skrill! If you had any conflicts with Nature’s Alliance, why did you not mention it during the mediation period and instead wait until now?”

The council member holding the scale furrowed his brows.

“My apologies, my lord! The animosity between us and Nature’s Alliance is not appropriate to be declared here, but please approve my request!” Skrill bowed, sounding resolute.

The lines on the council member’s forehead became deeper.

Honestly speaking, he did not want there to be internal friction between two small-scale guilds. However, Eight-Clawed Spider was not a medium-

scale guild, and challenges between guilds of the same ranking were allowed.

The moment Nature's Alliance was defeated, not only would they lose their spot, but they would also have to hand over all their resources to be re-distributed by the joint conference. Skrill could only, at most, obtain a portion of these resources.

As there were no benefits to it, few Magi chose to do this.

However, Leylin knew that they would definitely choose to take the icy caves! Knowing the situation, the abyss in his pupils grew darker, and a sneer appeared on his lips.

"Alright! Guild leader of Nature's Alliance, Celine, who will you send onstage?"

The council member looked towards Celine.

"I invite our famed professor, Mister Leylin, to represent my Nature's Alliance guild and battle!" Celine gave a slight bow.

Leylin sighed and stood up.

"I am also sending out our famed professor to represent we of the Eight-Clawed Spider onstage!" At the other side, Skrill immediately bowed and moved aside to reveal the figure behind him.

It was a human figure completely wrapped in black mist. There were also numerous black tendrils fluctuating around it.

"Hm? They both sent out famed professors!"

The surrounding Magi broke out into a discussion.

Though small-scaled guilds could invite famed professors to act as external support, only one professor was allowed to act. Since there were very few Magi working alone, such situations rarely appeared.

Now, with two suddenly appearing, it was no wonder that the Magi were surprised.

There were a few Magi who could somewhat see through part of the

strength of Leylin and the person wrapped in mist, and they shrunk back in fear, their eyes showing their terror.

“En! You have both chosen famed professors to battle?”

The council member holding a thick book looked at Leylin, and some probing spells even flashed, before he flipped through his book.

“Professor Leylin of Nature’s Alliance guild does not belong to any other guild, and can thus represent Nature’s Alliance!”

“Magus Skrill, please get the Magus behind you to reveal his face for inspection!”

The council members spoke to Skrill.

Seeing this, Skrill could only speak to the person wrapped in the mist in a low voice.

The black mist then dissipated, revealing a face that was foreign to all the Magi here.

“Xerxes greets all of you!”

What appeared in front of the audience was a very androgynous face. Even the voice was neither male nor female; one could not tell this person’s gender.

The Magus called Xerxes seemed to want to provoke Leylin, shooting him a glance from the corner of his eyes.

“En! The famed professor from the Eight-Clawed Spider meets the requirements as well. I hereby announce...”

Chapter 336: Six Stars

Just when the council member was about to announce the start of the fight, Leylin suddenly interrupted him.

“What? Do you want to admit your defeat right now, Celine?”

Of course, Skrill did not dare to be brazen with Leylin. In fact, regardless of whether it was Leylin or Xerxes, he could not afford to offend either of them. Hence, he could only taunt Celine.

“Rubbish!” Celine retorted angrily, worriedly looking at Leylin at the same time.

“Leylin... He... He wouldn’t just give up because of his inability to clearly see through Xerxes’s strength, would he?”

Celine clenched her fists, and even started breaking out in cold sweat.

Honestly, with her talents and meditation skills, Celine was very confident previously that she would be able to defeat all the Magi that had competed in the previous rounds.

However, upon seeing Leylin’s strength, her confidence had dissipated into thin air.

Right now, Celine realised that she did not understand Leylin a single bit.

“Magus Leylin! Do you have any problem?”

The council member holding the books asked.

“I recall that during the evaluation, other than these battling methods, aren’t there other ways as well?”

Leylin looked around the arena and took in Skrill’s taunting, Celine’s anxiety, and Xerxes’s killing intent. He laughed abruptly and then questioned.

Once the word went out, all the Magi looked stunned.

“Yes, there is such a rule. You can even be exempted from fighting

through your research contributions.” The council members quickly responded with little emotions.

“However, the results of your research have to be made public, and must be recognised by the council members. Furthermore, since Nature’s Alliance is a small-scale guild, the information you provide has to be at a rank of at least 5 stars”

Research with a rank of 5 stars was equivalent to research conducted by peak rank 1 Magi, and is obviously not easy to obtain.

Celine had the same idea previously, but unfortunately, the council members’ evaluation of research was extremely strict. Furthermore, the nine biggest large-scale guilds were already at the level where you could find the region’s finest research. Hence, very few things would interest them.

Moreover, a lot of time and effort was required to obtain research data of this level. The time invested in the research is no less than the time taken in inviting a semi converted elemental Magus. Hence, after conducting the research for a period of time, Celine gave up on that idea.

“Should your research data not be at the level of 5 stars, it would mean that you lose your independent research without garnering any gains. We hope you can think it over!”

“Please do not worry, I am very confident in my own research!” Furthermore, Magi have always been virtuous people searching for the truth, so in this path of the search for knowledge, I do not mind sharing the results of my research with my fellow man”

Leylin’s words were immediately well received by the crowd of magi.

Many high-level magi that are on friendly terms would gather to exchange their own experiences so that they could improve together.

“We can see the glory of ancient times in your being!”

The nine council members nodded their heads, “Please present your information!”

“I object!” Skrill immediately shouted. He agitatedly pointed towards Leylin, his eight-clawed spider legs seemingly trembling “We were first in issuing our challenge. Even if the information were to be presented, it can only be done so after the challenge!”

“Objection overruled! Magus Leylin’s ways are in accordance with the ancient rules!”

A few council members immediately suppressed Skrill’s objection. Magus Xerxes, on the other hand just coldly started, his thoughts unable to be determined.

Looking at the scene before him, Leylin snickered to himself.

Under the witness of so many Magi, a battle to the death would be like a monkey show set up for an audience. Was that really in his best interests?

Even though many Magi would be willing to do so under the influence of the interests involved, Leylin was not one of them!

Furthermore, in front of the nine peak rank 1 Magi, along with the Magi troops, Leylin would not be able to kill. Otherwise, as Leylin’s injuries were not yet completely healed, he would not be able to defend against the joint attack of nine peak rank 1 Magi. He also did not want to offend the nine large-scale guilds that the nine peak rank 1 Magi belonged to.

After all, the large-scale guilds must have Magi of at least rank 2. Leylin did not want to find trouble at all.

Hence since he was not able to kill, there was no point in accepting the challenge and putting on a monkey show for others.

Naturally, Leylin would choose the most effortless method.

He smiled, his every movement resembling how the ancient royalty were trained. He seemed calm, and together with the unique warlock’s charm that he had, this convinced many of the Magi.

The eyes of Mistress Sache, whom Leylin had previously met, lit up like two balls of fire.

Immediately, Leylin passed his already prepared research data to the

council members.

This was, in part, the flawed articles he had seen in the Nature's Alliance. The research had already progressed to the final stages, but unfortunately, because of the lack of crucial steps, the articles were not able to be developed into a meditation.

However, Leylin was different. He was a rank 2 Warlock, and had the support of the entire knowledge vault of the south coast. He could be said to have a bird's eye view of the whole situation. Together with the incredible mathematical operations of the A.I. Chip, with a few tweaks here and there, Leylin would be able to produce research of a high calibre.

Leylin was able to obtain the data without much trouble, and the information did not cost very much. However, when presented externally, these data were considered to have at least a rank of 5 stars, the equivalent importance of a peak rank 1 Magus. This was sufficient to allow the Magi present to vie for the information .

Sure enough, upon receiving the crystal ball filled with research formulas and graphical information, the faces of the council members became more solemn.

Their faces were serious while they perused the crystal ball in succession, and all the while, they were animatedly engaging in discussion.

In the end, they even gathered in a circle, agitatedly discussing and letting out cries of argument from time to time.

Meanwhile, Skril's heart grew heavier, while Celine's face revealed a smile. The Magi outside were anticipating the results, eager to see Leylin's research data.

With regards to all the goings on, Leylin pretended not to notice and continued to calmly stand upright.

Just based on this cultivation of calmness during the chaos, Leylin received the admiration of the Magi here.

"Hu!"

Eventually, the council members returned to their seats. The council member sitting in the middle even removed his presbyopic glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose.

Bang! He aggressively slammed his gavel downwards, which meant that the official evaluation of the research would begin.

“According to the council members’ unanimous decision, the information Magus Leylin has provided regarding the biological structure and bloodline of dark elves is to be classified as having a rank of 6 stars!”

Hua! The venue resonated with cries of wonder. The fact that Leylin’s provided information would be able to pass the test was within the expectations of many of the Magi. This was because Magi were not stupid; if they were to present any information, it must be because they were confident that it would suffice.

However, little did they expect that the information Leylin provided would actually have a rank of 6 stars!

Research of this nature must be close to the standards of a rank 2 Magus.

“These data will be recorded in the collective data vault. All Magi present will be able to use these contributions...”

After the council member had made the announcement, he immediately beamed. “Magus Leylin’s aspirations and intensive studying spirit has obtained my admiration. May I know whether there will be a chance in the future to invite Magus Leylin to my institute to undergo an interview?”

“It would be my honour!” Leylin bowed slightly.

Meanwhile, on the side, Celine seemed a bit dazzled.

“Master! We have succeeded!” Only when the sound of Ilya cheering entered her ear did she return to her senses, her eyes watery with tears that were on the verge of falling.

At this moment, all the difficulties they had experienced in the past, along with the ridicule they had to suffer, appeared in her mind. “Teacher,

can you see this...”

“Hmph!”

Skrill’s face was extremely dark. He glared at Celine, “Consider yourselves lucky this time around. I hope that luck will always follow you!”

After which, without turning back once, he left the venue, with Xerxes unhurriedly following behind him.

This time around, the plot of the Eight-Clawed Spider was fruitless, and with the possibility of inducing rage from the Dense Fog Forest, Skril did not want to stay at the conference for a single minute longer.

“Leylin! Thank you!”

After Leylin returned to his seat, Celine held his hands, her face filled with a genuine smile.

“It was nothing!” Leylin smiled.

Actually, Leylin was very sure that this matter was far from over.

After their open and aboveboard plans have failed, the opponent could only utilise underhanded means now.

“Underhanded means? But those are my favourites!”

Leylin smiled coldly. Right now, during the joint conference, the only restrained party in this case wasn’t merely his opponent but himself as well. After all, he had started off as a legitimate dark Magus. Bloodshed and killing were very common to him.

When that happened, it would be too late for the other party to have regrets.

With regards to Leylin’s contributions, the Nature’s Alliance was able to be exempted from the challenge this time around, and could be considered to have survived an ordeal.

After the evaluation, there was nothing much to see at the conference.

There were only a few guilds left to compete with one another. During the majority of the time, the apprentices would compete in a friendly

context. This was also one of the reasons why Celine had brought Obo and Ilya to the conference.

Leylin had completed his task at hand, and so he sat with Celine, who was beaming, as they watched other Magi compete.

"Leylin! I can't believe that I would see you here!"

At this moment, a Magus with a gold-plated, robotic right hand walked over, his face radiating with happiness.

"I can't believe this, you actually joined the Nature's Alliance without telling anyone!"

"Hello, Siegfried!"

Leylin greeted him. "There was no other choice since they had something very tempting to me in their hands! Moreover, I'm only a honorary professor, which means I can also guild."

"Oh, I know!"

Siegfried's face revealed a smile that all men would be able to understand. It was obvious that Leylin was bewitched by Celine, was it not?

"Come! Let me bring you to meet some of the high-ranking officers in the Earth Fire Association!"

Compared to his previous interactions with Leylin, Siegfried was now more cordial.

After all, Siegfried was currently not able to discern Leylin's true abilities. However, based on the presentation of his high-end research standards and academic attainments, it was worth it to rope Leylin in.

In addition, a few high-level guilds council members had all expressed their friendliness in succession, which made it even more plausible to try and rope Leylin in.

Chapter 337: Mist Transformation

A carriage travelled across the dark plains unhurriedly.

Two wildebeests pulled the carriage. Due to the unhurried nature of the journey, these two steeds snorted as they gnawed at the plants along the path from time to time.

Around the carriage, a layer of light illuminated the surrounding land.

This was due to a constant illumination magic being applied to the horse carriage.

“Leylin, you made Obo and Ilya lower the speed of the carriage, and you also had me prepare this. What is this all about?”

Within the horse carriage, Celine asked Leylin as she suddenly raised her head and lifted a crystal ball that glowed with runes.

“It’s obviously to wait for somebody!” Leylin reclined on the cushioned seat as he squinted his eyes.

“Is it...Skrill from the Eight-Clawed Spider?”

Celine was an intelligent woman, and her expression changed immediately.

“Not only that, but perhaps also Magi from the Dense Fog Forest. After all, I am here!”

Leylin chuckled and suddenly walked out to the front of the carriage.

“Prof...Professor, look!”

The horse carriage stopped, and Obo, who had been riding, stuttered. In front of him, a dense wall of fog formed and blocked the way.

Although there were areas in the Twilight Zone with dense fog, such thick fog was abnormal. The power of the Magi who were mingled within the fog had given away their determination to massacre them tonight.

“A fog barrier! A specialised spell only known to Magi from the Dense Fog Forest. It really is them!”

Celine sighed from behind, "What should we do?"

After having experienced so many things, Leylin had already taken a leading role in Celine's heart. Since this was the case, once she encountered a problem, she would seek out Leylin's opinion first.

"As planned, all of you do not have to interfere with this, just keep yourselves safe!"

Leylin hopped down from the horse carriage and walked towards the wall of fog.

Under the illumination of the light, the grey fog seemed to congeal like a serum, with spiral waves occasionally forming.

"No matter how well-mannered, organised, or awe-inspiring they are, a Magus will always be a Magus! For the sake of benefits, taking a small risk like this is nothing!"

Leylin smirked.

Under such circumstances, if all of them were to perish here, Leylin would be able to take care of any repercussions later by tidying things up a little after having killed them.

As such he wasn't surprised but was rather happy instead.

"It really saves me the time of gathering them all in one bunch like this!" Leylin immediately raised both his hands and pressed on the wall of fog.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

With Leylin as the centre, a layer of frost began to spread and froze the wall of fog.

In a very short amount of time, the wall of fog had turned into walls of ice that revealed inverted images of the objects in the surroundings.

This frost power came from the aftermath of the icy radiation he had received, which he had just released all at once.

"En! Not bad!" Leylin looked at both his hands.

His hands now were snow white, like jade, and even revealed a lustre

deep inside them.

“With the adaptation to increased tolerance to the icy radiation completed, I can begin to freeze the imprints inside my bloodline!”

Leylin smiled and gently tapped on the icy wall.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha! Ka-cha! Ka-cha!

Fine cracks appeared and spread rapidly from where his fingers had tapped.

Seconds later, the web of cracks covered the entirety of the ice walls, which subsequently shattered and turned into fine shards of ice that fluttered into the wind.

Rumble!

With a huge rumbling sound, the wall of fog crumbled like toy bricks breaking apart.

Several figures were soon revealed after the dispersion of the fog wall.

“As expected, it’s you Skrill! And also, Xerxes!”

Celine gritted her teeth.

The ones obstructing their way were Skrill, Xerxes, along with several old geezers. Their bodies radiated the might of semi-converted elemental Magi, with traces of grey fog that continuously swirled around their fingers.

Expressions of alarm could be seen on the faces of the geezers as they were rather frightened by Leylin’s apparent ease in his dispelling of the fog wall.

“You are indeed a peak rank 1 Magus, Mister!”

Amongst this group, the androgynous Xerxes, who was distinctly the leader, said and bowed.

“These are issues that we have with the Nature’s Alliance, would Mister Leylin please choose to back down for the moment? After this matter, no matter what conditions you have agreed on with them, we will multiply

them manifold!”

As he finished speaking, it was like as if seal that had come undone as a violent power coursed through Xerxes’ body, which made Celine turn pale. As for Obo and Ilya, they had almost fainted.

“A peak rank 1 Magus! He is actually a peak rank 1 Magus!”

Celine clutched the hem of her robes tightly.

Under the presence of another Magus of equal standing, one might choose to compromise. However, Leylin shook his head and outright refused Xerxes’s suggestion. To him, anyone who coveted the icy cave could only be a certain type of person, a dead one!

“Pardon me for my impudence then!”

In the next moment, Xerxes, who still had a calm air, underwent a tremendous bodily change.

Similar to a fiery volcanic eruption, intense energy waves emanated from his body, and countless grey energy particles condensed and formed a tide of energy waves.

“Fog Giant!”

Along with Xerxes’ incantation, a giant elemental genie appeared.

From waist down this genie was a mass swirling fog and its upper body had the shape of a man. It’s whole body was greyish white, and the muscles on both arms were extremely defined. Its ginormous stature was also extremely impressive.

“In my name, I order you to kill him!” Xerxes pointed at Leylin.

The Fog Giant roared, and two fists the size of hills smashed towards Leylin’s direction!

“Attacking with such power from the start? Are you planning to kill me?”

The slight smile about Leylin’s lips did not falter.

“Looks like he’s guessed that I know about the Icy Caves and thought I

was a contender, so he's planning to kill and silence me?"

In actuality, this opponent had guessed correctly, but what they did not know was that Leylin's strength far surpassed them, and had the same intentions of killing them!

"Wind!"

As he faced the Fog Giant's attack, Leylin merely recited a syllable.

Weng! A violent black tornado formed between him and the giant. The large number of wind blades pushed the giant's fists back.

Hsss!

Following that, a spiritual force more powerful, more sinister than Xerxes' descended upon the battlefield.

Black darkness elemental particles swept through like a tide, crushing the energy wave that Xerxes had formed into nothingness.

In the Twilight Zone, darkness elemental particles were very concentrated. On top of that, the solidification of Leylin's spiritual force as a rank 2 Warlock could overpower his opponent.

Countless darkness elemental particles gathered around Leylin, to the point that they could be seen with the naked eye.

As a light wind lifted him into the air, the elemental particles fused with the tornado! Its volume had expanded immediately and it turned into an ancient creature with a ferocious, violent aura.

This was a tall and lanky giant beast that was around seven to eight hundred metres long. It had dense black scales on its body, and a pair of amber eyes that were as large as a water jar. It carried with it a malevolent, bloodthirsty aura!

Meanwhile, Leylin stood on this large black giant snake, appearing to be calm.

Just the confrontation between this giant snake and giant was enough for Skrill, Celine and the others to try their best to take shelter and quickly retreat to another area.

“This is a battle between peak rank 1 Magi! Just a single ripple of energy can easily destroy you. Be careful!”

While Celine retreated, she protected the two acolytes and warned them.

Meanwhile, Obo and Ilya were staring at the person on top of the large giant snake enviously, their expressions filled with yearning and hope.

Celine could only smile wryly at this scene.

How could one reach the peak of rank 1 so easily? These two acolytes were the core seeds of her guild. One would already thank the heavens if they could rise to become an official Magus in the future, but to reach Leylin's level? Difficult!

“He... He's actually this strong?”

On the other end, while Skrill knew Leylin was at the peak of rank 1, he had no idea how powerful Magi like Leylin could be, and he could only gape in response.

“How is Lord Xerxes?” Seeing the Fog Giant beaten down by the giant black snake, Skrill was extremely anxious.

“Don't worry! Our guild leader is very strong, and he hasn't even brought his trump card out yet!”

The other two semi-converted elders immediately comforted him. In their eyes however, there was very little confidence.

“Distinguished Leylin, you truly are an opponent worthy of respect!”

At this moment, Xerxes suddenly exclaimed, “This next attack will be my last. I hope you won't disappoint me.”

“Mist Transformation!” Xerxes muttered in a low voice.

Large amounts of fog were sent out from his body, and it constantly gathered at the body of the Fog Giant. Meanwhile, Xerxes' body shrunk until all that was left was a pile of clothes.

Meanwhile, the Fog Giant rapidly increased in size until it was 50% larger than before, and fluctuations could be seen on its face. With a grey

flash of light, Xerxes' face appeared there.

"I remember now! This is Mist Transformation, the strongest attack of the guild leader of the Dense Fog Forest! He once used this attack to kill a Magus who was similarly at the peak of rank 1! Be careful, Leylin! This Xerxes is the disguise of the guild leader of the Dense Fog Forest!"

Celine, who was standing not too far away suddenly seemed to remember something and reminded him loudly.

"I see!" Leylin nodded.

The effects of his opponent's spell were not half-bad.

The original Fog Giant's attack power was only around 60, but after Mist Transformation, the A.I. Chip warned Leylin that the number had increased to almost 79.

This was practically the limits of what a rank 1 Magus could do! It was no surprise that his opponent could kill Magi of similar rank with this attack.

Chapter 338: Severe Injuries

Leylin glanced at the Fog Giant that was in front of him.

After Xerxes fused with the Fog Giant, not only did its strength increase, but its movements also became more agile.

“Based on the principle of elemental essence conversion, can the physical body itself be converted into an element? An interesting train of thought!”

How knowledgeable was Leylin in this area? He had stored all the academic knowledge from the south coast in the A.I. Chip, and with a few glances, he could roughly deduce the theory and application behind this ultimate attack formed from fog.

“It’s a pity that a Magus’ body is the only place where spiritual force can be stored. The moment the physical body is converted, it will then lose the chance to go one step further!”

Leylin sighed, seemingly looking upon his opponent with pity.

This attitude had obviously infuriated Xerxes, and with a roar, the Fog Giant charged over.

Leylin fearlessly manipulated the large giant serpent and had it coil around his opponent.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The scale of the battle increased in size, and giant rocks the size of hills were smashed by the two of them, flying in all directions. There were even some sparks at the tail, creating a trailing flame.

“To this extent?!”

Not only Celine but also the other Magi were stunned.

Meanwhile, while on the back of the giant snake, black light flashed in Leylin’s eyes. Numerous black fireballs flew out from the shadows.

The fireballs converged and condensed, forming a small, blazing black sun that was even more sinister looking.

Latent Fireball, the spell that Leylin had invented, had a reputation that could rock the south coast with the numerous Magi that had been killed by it, had finally revealed itself once again in Twilight Zone.

And the Magus he was facing was at the peak of rank 1!

Xerxes' expression became serious, evidently sensing the destructive power hidden within Latent Fireball. Hah! Hah!

Pant! Pant!

Making the first move, Xerxes took in a deep breath, and two streams of white gas that could be seen with the naked eye rushed into his mouth.

This stream was extremely powerful, to the point that even a tornado appeared in the air. Even bits of plants and little rocks began to float.

After taking in this large amount of air, the Fog Giant's chest expanded at a speed that was visible to the naked eye. It was as if it was a giant frog.

"Secondary Energy Air Cannon!" The giant opened its mouth, puffed out, and a light green compressed air bomb-like cannonball attacked Leylin.

"Go!"

The air cannonball brought with it immense wind pressure, and Leylin's clothes rustled loudly from the wind.

Meanwhile, Leylin indifferently pointed at the Latent Fireball in the air.

The black latent fireball immediately stretched out, formed a black lance that caused distortion ripples in the air, and charged to the front of the air cannonball.

Pu! Like a balloon that had been pierced, the black lance pierced through the air cannonball.

Following this, the Secondary Energy Air Cannon exploded and deflated.

The black lance's power continuously extended as it ruthlessly used its momentum to plough into the chest of the Fog Giant.

Black rays flashed and some flames blazed on the body of the giant, tenaciously extending till they covered half its chest.

Xerxes, who had fused with the Fog Giant, winced, and had evidently felt pain.

“Ah...” The Latent Fireball burnt not only the physical body, but also the formless spiritual force, and even the spirit! Xerxes began to scream pitifully.

“Don’t think you can get away with this when you’ve gotten me in this state!” Xerxes’ looked resolute, bringing the Fog Giant in front of the black giant snake.

“Self-detonate!”

With this thought, the entire Fog Giant exploded.

The black giant snake was drowned in fog and fire.

Rumble!

The ground constantly vibrated, as if a large earthquake had happened. Dust floated tens of metres high and blocked the whole scene from view.

Moments later, a human figure was launched out from within the dust.

“It’s the Guild Leader!” A few Magi from the Dense Fog Forest immediately went up to help.

Xerxes did not look to be in a good state, with a large hole in his chest and numerous wounds all over.

All of a sudden, rays of light fluctuated above his face, and his original face disappeared, revealing that of a middle-aged man who looked to be a pacifist.

“It really is the guild leader of the Dense Fog Forest!” Celine muttered not far away, the crystal ball in her hands constantly flashing with light.

“Guild leader, are you alright?”

A few semi-converted Magi elders immediately asked concernedly, after catching hold of Xerxes.

“He’s also injured, but his injuries are slightly lighter than mine. He can still battle. Let’s leave quickly!”

Though Xerxes looked to be seriously hurt, his ability to think was not compromised.

“Understood!” The few Magi made to leave, with Skrill following closely behind.

“All of you can leave except for him!” Leylin’s voice sounded from within the cloud of dust.

Shortly afterwards, an icy blue ray of light shot out, striking Skrill who was trying to activate a scroll!

A blue layer of ice immediately formed around him, turning him into a blue, human-shaped ice sculpture.

The dust settled, revealing Leylin’s figure.

He was now extremely pale, with some blood at the corner of his lips. The fluctuations of his spiritual force were unstable, and he looked to be seriously injured.

“Since Lord Leylin has spoken, we’ll leave him behind!”

Xerxes struggled to answer, and upon hearing this, the semi-converted Magi supported Xerxes and retreated, not even sparing a second glance in his direction.

“Leylin!” Celine immediately rushed out, not hiding any of her worry.

“I’m fine!” Leylin waved his arms, “Have you recorded everything down?”

“Yes. I’ll send them to the council members of the joint conference and indict them!” Celine looked furious.

“No, not yet.” Leylin waved his arms.

“Also, bring Skrill along as well. He’s an important witness!”

“Yes!” Though Celine was still doubtful, she naturally did not dare ask more questions after having seen Leylin showing off his might.

As she wanted to give Leylin space to recuperate, Celine went outside and squeezed in with Obo and Ilya.

In the carriage, there was only Leylin and the frozen Skrill.

A layer of black elemental particles instantly formed a divide that split the interior and exterior of the carriage into two completely different sections.

Leylin stretched and stood up.

It did not even look like he was injured at all.

“A surprise attack midway and having a witness is crucial enough to indict the other side for serious penalties. However, this will, at most, shake Dense Fog Forest’s position. It isn’t practical if we want to completely uproot them.”

Leylin understood this well.

In addition, since their opponents had tried to kill them, it was alright for Leylin to fight back and even kill one or two Magi from their side. However, if he did not let this matter rest and eradicated them completely, then that would be going against the laws of the subterranean world.

Magi grasped the bigger picture in the Twilight Zone and attempted to unify against the elven empire and darkness creatures. Hence having such internal conflicts were disapproved of within the committee.

Even a rank 2 Magus would find it difficult to deal with this situation, much less Leylin, who had yet to completely recover.

Hence, he had to tempt his opponents to slip-up even more, and then respond while protected by a valid excuse.

“After seeing my strength, I’m sure they must be feeling uneasy!”

Leylin grinned while stroking his chin.

“Besides, the seeds of enmity have been planted. Believing we’re almost equally powerful and considering my status as ‘heavily injured’, paired with the tremendous benefits from the Icy World, I believe they wouldn’t consider trying to settle this with us. Rather, they’ll try to eliminate me as soon as possible!”

Medium-scaled guilds had an ample number of hidden cards. Furthermore, besides the guild leader, they had many powerful Magi that,

when they banded together, would cause a great deal of grief even to a peak rank 1 Magus.

Xerxes had not gone all out this time, naturally because he believed in his might.

The next time, he would come out at full strength!

However, this was what Leylin wanted. Their opponent was already at their doorstep, and wanted to eliminate the guild! Under this circumstances, it was reasonable for him to strike back brazenly and destroy the enemy, right?

Besides, the buffering time before this that had happened was enough for Leylin to use the freezing bloodline imprint to regain his full strength.

Once he regained his strength as a rank 2 Warlock, he would be free to wander freely. As long as he did not meet anyone like that old rank 3 freak previously, he would definitely be able to protect himself.

“Next up!” Leylin shifted his gaze to Skrill, who was in the block of ice.

The Spider Man’s eyes were unblinking, and he was only able to display a pleading expression.

Leylin smiled gently and advanced...

When the carriage reached a waterfall, Leylin descended from the carriage with a pale appearance.

Meanwhile, Skrill had already been retrieved from the ice and was now merely unconscious. Celine ordered for him to be imprisoned.

This was obviously Leylin’s plan.

Using a few methods, he found that Skrill did not, in fact, know much about the Icy World. All he knew was that the Dense Fog Forest was drooling over the icy caves, and Leylin’s killing intent died down.

From his perspective, Skrill would make a pretty good subordinate. He was semi-converted, and that was enough to do many things in Twilight Zone.

In addition, he was an able witness. Though Leylin did not believe in this method, this was enough to mitigate some potential troubles.

Though he was unafraid of trouble, he did dislike it. It was not a bad idea to reduce it as much as possible.

Lastly, Nature's Alliance was much too weak. To complete his grand plan, he would need a few capable subordinates.

Leylin could not really trust Celine.

It wasn't in fear of her betrayal. This woman was far too intelligent, and after gaining a large amount of power, she might prioritise her own benefits over Leylin's words.

She might not betray him, but there might be instances where she paid lip service to him, using her position and getting overconfident.

Hence, it was necessary to pull in and control people who would definitely side with him.

In Leylin's eyes, Nature's Alliance's power would expand greatly, and would require his own staff.

If not, it was easy to be hoodwinked.

After seeing the demise of the Dense Fog Forest, he was sure that Skrill would make a sensible decision. After all, dark Magi were also very adept at controlling emotions!

Chapter 339: Frost Innate Spell

A few days later, rumours had begun to spread around the Twilight Zone.

The rumours claimed that the guild leader of the Dense Fog Forest longed for the resources held by the Nature's Alliance and the other small-scale guilds, and had been plotting to absorb them on the sly. There was even news that the Dense Fog Forest wanted to openly rob and murder the guild leader of the Nature's Alliance!

Even though the assassination was not successful, there were rumours about both Celine and the Nature's Alliance honorary professor, Leylin, being seriously injured.

These rumours first started spreading within a small circle of Magi, but very soon more people came to know about them. What was stranger about this situation was that the Dense Fog Forest had not sent anyone to refute the rumours, but had instead added fuel to the fire.

The largest propagator would reap the most benefits! Even though medium-scale guilds or even large-scale guilds had done the same, it was rare to see such unfiltered, unsightly tactics like those of the Dense Fog Forest.

Immediately all small-scale guilds of the Eastern Twilight Zone became cautious and distanced themselves from the Nature's Alliance.

At the narrow valley behind a big waterfall, Nature's Alliance's headquarters.

Celine looked inside the laboratory within a large icy mountain that was a short distance away and sighed.

Upon returning to Nature's Alliance's, Leylin had practically stayed in the laboratory the entire time.

"I need time to heal! Remember, whatever the matter may be, don't disturb me!"

That was Leylin's words then, but the cold icy look within his eyes had

caused Celine to be even more fearful.

Obviously, Celine had instructed the release of the rumours within the Twilight Zone as to ensure that the Dense Fog Forest would have some reservations before making their next move.

However, Dense Fog Forest's silence was not expected, and this made Celine's heart very heavy.

In these kinds of situations, the natural thing to do would be to first flare up and then to maintain silence.

"I hope Leylin can recover soon!"

Celine's eyes revealed a sense of worry.

At this point in time, Leylin was the only person she could depend on.

At this moment, within the laboratory that had already transformed into an icy mountain, Leylin seemed to have been leisurely observing his palm.

On his palm that was as white as jade there appeared to be a glowing white layer radiating from it.

"Frost!" Leylin gently recited an ancient spell in the Byron language.

Whoosh!

A cold wind whistled, and many snowflakes rotated on his palm and formed a small frost tornado.

"I can't believe that after the frost had taken effect, not only has my sea of consciousness fully healed, a power within in my body regarding an ability related to frost energy has also been awakened!"

Leylin casually toyed with the mini frost tornado on his palm, his eyes revealed that he seemed to be distracted.

In his mind, his rejuvenated body had received a set of data from the A.I. Chip.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 21.1, Agility: 14.4, Vitality: 27.9, Spiritual force: 104.3, Magic power: 104 (magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force)]

[Beep! A new innate talent has been created within the Host's body, transferring data]

The A.I. Chip's voice intoned.

[Host's innate spell: Increase in affinity and control of frost energy particles. Reduction by 40 degrees of frost related attacks! Ability to manipulate frost energy in a small area!]

This is similar to having a new innate spell, even though it is only rank 1.

"No! That's not all!" Leylin immediately ordered the A.I Chip to show his graph on elemental capabilities.

In fact, everyone has an affinity with various element types, only that it is extremely small and almost negligible.

Talented acolytes had affinity with various element types far greater than that of the normal levels, at least 50 times and above, and that was also the Magi world's official levels.

Originally, Leylin had the most affinity with the darkness element type followed by the fire type, and then the plant type which was such a small amount that it could be ignored. With regards to his affinity with the other elemental types, they were so minute that it could only be represented in decimal points.

As for now, the graph representing Leylin's elemental affinities had experienced minor changes.

The darkness element type still had the longest bar, and even exceeded that of previous levels. This strengthening of Leylin's innate gift could be attributed to the numerous triggering of Leylin's bloodline, and because he chose to cultivate in the darkness element. Thus, he obtained an increase in the element, which was a lot higher than that of other elements, even exceeding that of the total of the remaining elements.

The next highest ranked element Leylin had an affinity with is that of the red bar that represented the fire element, which had also experienced an increase, though of a smaller magnitude.

After the fire element, was that of the green bar representing the plant element type. It was extremely short, indicating that Leylin's innate gift in this area was not as developed as the other elements.

After this, there was an additional bar.

It was a shade of pale blue, representing the element pertaining to freezing, frost, and ice.

Originally, the affinity levels were extremely low, to the point that the A.I. Chip did not represent it in the histogram. However, now the frost element type had obviously obtained a large-scale increase.

Under the detection of the A.I. Chip, Leylin now possessed an innate talent in the frost elemental affinity!

"So, this is the way to increase elemental affinity after birth..."

Leylin sighed deeply: "What a pity. This is not of any use to me anymore."

The elemental affinity typically represented the path a Magi took. When Leylin was still a rank 1 Magus, he had already chosen the darkness elemental particle type to develop in, even choosing to convert his elemental essence in it.

This was the most sensible decision because the darkness type had the highest elemental affinity, which meant that the results it could produce along this path would be the greatest!

Hence, he was currently not able to change his elemental type, nor wished to change it.

Furthermore, his innate ability with the frost elemental type was too low, and could not even measure up to that of the plant type!

To have an insignificant increase of innate ability was of little value!

"However, this can be something worth thinking about!" Leylin stroked his chin, and appeared to be in deep in thought.

Since the elemental affinity type could be changed and influenced by skills acquired after birth, what about that of the spiritual aptitude?

Honestly, compared to the newly increased frost elemental affinity, Leylin would much rather have hoped for an increase in spiritual aptitude.

His spiritual aptitude had been examined when he first entered the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy; it was of the most common grade 3 aptitude. Amongst the many acolytes this is considered as a medium level!

After his bloodline as a Warlock had experienced numerous advancement, upon the A.I. Chip's re-examination, his spiritual aptitude had now received a boost, and was now considered a good level within that of the other grade 3 aptitudes.

However, it was still far from enough.

Compared to geniuses with grade 5 aptitudes, Leylin knew that he still had a long way to go. If not for the help of the A.I. Chip, the support of large doses of potions, and the good fortune of acquiring the bloodline Warlock heritage, he would not know where he would have been now.

As a result, he had been continuously searching for the easiest ways to alter his spiritual aptitude.

However, these methods were rarely seen in the Magi world.

There were probably ways to increase one's elemental affinity, but with regards to spiritual aptitude. Its involvement with many other aspects and its intangibility, made it difficult to conjecture.

At most, only a handful of Magi who were skilled in high-grade meditation techniques could have, when promoted to a new level, forcefully increase their spiritual aptitudes by a small amount.

At this moment, Leylin involuntarily laughed.

"Perhaps I was too greedy. The spiritual aptitude involves the spirit. I had not been as in-depth in my previous research, and am now lacking in skills as well. After I get promoted to a Warlock of a higher rank, and have commenced discussions with a few other higher ranked Magi, perhaps I would be able to find solutions to rectify problems of this nature!"

Leylin thought to himself.

“Regards this the frost innate spell...” He glanced at the pale blue bar chart again, “I can only put it aside for now!”

However, in his heart, he had already been making plans. For the innate ability he had in the frost element type, perhaps in the future this gift would be useful, in particular when he would decide to explore the Icy World or when side effects from the removal of his Warlock bloodline.

These abnormal changes had been caused by the radiation from the Icy World and might not be that simple an affair after all.

“No matter what, being able to increase an area of ability, albeit not being able to raise it any further in the future is still pretty good!”

Leylin opened his eyes and his face revealed a smile.

“Furthermore, what’s most important is still this!”

Rays of silver spiritual forces radiated from Leylin’s eyes into the frost tornado within his hands.

Whoosh

Together with the rapid wind movements, the frost tornado’s physical form expanded multiple times, and the edges of the spiral formed sharp knife blades.

The surrounding areas were seemingly frozen as pressure radiated from Leylin’s body.

“Finally, I’ve managed to recover all my abilities as a rank 2 Magus!”

Leylin’s smile became bigger. Having recovered his peak strength from when he was on the south coast, and having removed the emotional instability of his bloodline, the power he now possessed was greater than ever before.

In actual fact, on the night of his return to the Nature’s Alliance headquarters, Leylin had used the runes that the Icy Jade Scorpion Emperor was carrying on its back and had made a mark of the frost bloodline!

Furthermore, Leylin had secretly left Nature’s Alliance headquarters and

had chosen a safe place to practice the defrosting process.

With regards to his personal safety, Leylin had never liked or wished to depend on others.

He had left for treatment, and had not allowed for anyone to discover him. During his defrosting period, he had created a protective ice layer around him, one that was harder than steel, and hence could have assured his own safety.

Furthermore, under Leylin's deliberate control, the entire thawing process was extremely fast. It took just one night for him to have solved the problem.

Under Leylin's meticulous calculations, it was no wonder that he had smoothly restored his original abilities without any big hiccups.

The so-called 'treatment' here was merely a facade Leylin had let out to lure others into taking the bait.

"It's about time, I have already ordered Celine to secretly release the news. Through the interrogation these few days, Skrill has already given in, and will soon be sent to the committee members of the conference just like that of the crystal ball!"

Leylin's eyes shined with a tint of deep thought. Imagery evidence could be falsified, but if a witness was present, the Dense Fog Forest, who was a medium-scale guild, would definitely still be in trouble.

Chapter 340: Invasion And Siege

Continuing the trial of the joint conference, the Dense Fog Forest would most likely not be destroyed, but there would be bloodshed. In addition, a decrease in their evaluation was a possible punishment, which would be a big loss in benefits!

Needless to say, the “seriously injured” Leylin was here too!

Since there was so much hatred, the only way to end this would be through complete destruction, was something that the other party could not tolerate.

Thus, they would take advantage of Leylin being in the midst of recovery by gathering all their manpower, and destroy the Nature’s Alliance!

This was what Leylin also hoped for.

“I had specially given him a few days to rally his men. I hope he doesn’t let me down!” Leylin sneered.

Shortly after, he turned and looked towards the canyon’s exit.

“Coming!”

At this moment, Magi wearing black Chinese-styled gowns stood in a circle outside the Canyon, silently crowding around several figures in the middle.

The leader of the group, a middle-aged man with a face worthy of veneration, was the escaped guild leader of the Dense Fog Forest.

“Tsk Tsk! Gus, you really should be embarrassed, being reduced to this miserable state after getting injured from an honorary professor in a small-scaled guild!”

So ‘Gus’ was his real name, and the previously used name, ‘Xerxes,’ was fake!

Another man who stood tall beside Gus, was an elderly man in his 50s or 60s. He had wrinkles all over his face. With his slanted nose, sharp, narrow pairs of eyes, it made him look even more sinister than Gus.

Even as he mocked Gus, no anger was seen in the eyes of the surrounding Magi from the Dense Fog Forest, as if they never heard what was said.

The reason for their change in attitude was that this old man was radiating huge waves of energy.

Among the emptiness in the middle of the circle formed by the old men, radiations of spiritual force could be observed. Impressively, it was the strength of a powerful peak rank one Magus!

“If you had been me, the result would not have been any better!”

Gus sighed in the face of mockery, but deep down, was still fearful of Leylin’s strength.

Having profound knowledge of Gus’ strength, the old man turned solemn too; “If Leylin has already recovered from his injuries, then I want twice the compensation!”

“If it’s doubled, let it be doubled!” Gus promised immediately with clenched teeth.

“I have actually used an ancient ‘light protector’ rune. That’s the reason why I could recover fast in such a short period of time. The other party could not possibly have such a thing...”

This was the confidence Gus had, as he hailed from a medium-scaled guild. To him, as a small-scaled guild, it was impossible for Nature’s Alliance to have such an asset.

“Je Je! You’re right. Besides, they are at most at the same level with you, how can they stop us two on their own?”

The old man chuckled.

“My Lord guild leader! The broken signal has been repaired!” At this moment, a semi-converted elemental Magus walks over and spoke to Gus “Great! Attack immediately! I want the Nature’s Alliance guild removed entirely from the Twilight Zone!”

A malevolent look swept across Gus’ face, and he suddenly raised his

hand.

More than a dozen of different coloured bright lights fluttered out of the Canyon. Unexpectedly, each one was a rank one Magus!

As a medium-scaled guild, it was not a big problem if the Dense Fog Forest nurtured or recruited official Magi. considering the long, accumulated history of the more than 30 Magi.

This time, Gus planned to use a large number forces from his guild.

Bang!

More than a dozen brilliant lights rushed to the entrance of the canyon, but were immediately stopped by a membrane formed from a defensive layer of light.

“It’s just defensive formation made by an insignificant small-scaled guild! Destroy it!”

From the layer of bright light, a screeching sound was heard and black light converged, forming the shape of a large axe. The head of the axe even had strong black iron chains coiled around it which were threads of bright, cold and threatening light.

Ka Cha!

The giant hatchet ruthlessly struck!

In the wake of the loud strike, the entire membrane of light fell apart, disintegrating and dispersing into small specks of light that gradually darkened.

“Enemy Attacking!”

As an official Magus, Celine was the first to react. Her face turned deathly pale and a gush of cold wind sent her to the entrance of the experiment lab within the icy mountain.

Shaaa! The black light flashed past, a mole no smaller than the size of a young boy crawled out, his two long, grizzly beards dragging across the floor.

“This Celine! Causing trouble this time! If I am still alive later, you’ll have to send me 10 times as many berries as before!”

The mole stroked his beard, with an unwilling look on his face.

“Damn it! If it wasn’t for the deal that I made with that stupid old man at that time, I wouldn’t have to be stuck here defending his place!”

“All of the acolytes, meet me here now!”

Celine did not even have the time to force a smile, let alone talk to the mole. She just communicated directly with the rest of the acolytes in the guild.

She was extremely sure that the attack this time around was from the Dense Fog Forest’s men!

In fact, during a war between the official Magi, acolytes were just cannon fodder! By sending them out was only a disgrace, and even causing needless casualties.

Currently, they had a slim chance of survival!

Celine’s eyes flashed with a tinge of hope, and started shouting towards the laboratory, “My Lord Leylin! It is the Magi of the Dense Fog Forest! They have violated the rules of the joint conference and launched an attack on our guild!”

But what took with Celine by surprise even more than the sudden attack was the fact that there was no reply from inside.

Celine repeated the message thrice, and it was only after she could not wait any longer and broke the layer of ice, that Leylin’s voice responded. “I’m still in the midst of recovering! If this gets interrupted, I’m afraid that there will be immediate repercussions....”

“How much longer do you need?” Celine clasped onto her handkerchief tightly.

“Ten minutes!” After some silence, Leylin’s voice was heard again.

“Alright! I will fight for you during this period of time!” Celine took a deep breath towards the acolyte that was previously there and cleared her

throat.

“As the guild leader, I command you to protect this place at all costs! It might be hard to you, but with the help of spell formations, I need you to persevere just for ten minutes!

“Yes, my Lord! We will fight to the end!”

After being distracted for a moment, the acolytes below started an uproar one after another, Obo and Ilya were among those acolytes.

It was obvious and they clearly understood what the future had in store for them if their guild was defeated today.

“That’s great! Let’s activate it! Grandpa Cedric!!!”

Celine took a deep breath.

“Okay, alright! I can’t stand youngsters like you all!” the mole shook his head and suddenly plopped to the ground!

In some instant, black rays of light spread out, forming a big spell formation runes on the ground.

A barrier of light rose and combined with the original spell formation, engulfing Leylin and the experiment lab within.

Boom! Blast!

At this moment, a group of enemy Magi arrived at the scene, and the acolytes that were not able to get into the barrier in time were severely injured.

A small boy was cut in half by a blade of light. His upper torso was still wailing as he tried to breathe.

Another female acolyte, who was decimated into a pool of blood by a green sphere that fell from the sky, did not even had time make a sound.

More and more acolytes were instantly buried to death, by huge broken structure of the building that was shattered by magic spells, also without being able to make any sound.

As Celine looked at the devastating scene in front of her, she was unable

to control herself and broke down into tears. They were the future potential Magi of Nature's Alliance, where her sweat and blood were poured in.

"I found it! It's here!"

This new barrier of light, which was visibly thicker and stronger than the ones before, caught the attention of the enemy Magi quickly. Very soon, more than a dozen rays of light enveloped the entire place, creating faint shadows in the middle.

Clang! Celine threw a communication device on the ground.

"The signal is disrupted! Hold on!"

She placed her palm on the barrier, as a huge wave of spiritual force and magical power was poured forth and injected into the barrier.

The rest of the acolytes followed suit, though their spiritual powers were very weak. With a mere touch, most of the acolytes' faces turned pale, as though they had been beaten up by a large hammer.

Boom!

Both sides did not exchange many words, and more than a dozen colourful energy beams bombarded the spell formation.

Bang! Numerous acolytes lay paralyzed on the floor, most of them having fainted. Celine could barely even stand up straight and was on the verge of collapsing.

Upon seeing two shadows behind the numerous Magi, Celine's expression was filled with despair.

At this time, it has not even been half the time that Leylin had requested. Fighting against the two peak rank one Magi had made Celine lose all hope and strength to fight back.

In the laboratory behind Celine, Leylin quietly waited, a cold and detached expression on his face...

"It should be roughly about now, right?" He muttered.

In fact, Leylin could have fought back, but he had waited until the Nature's Alliance had racked up a disastrous amount of casualty...

As for the dead acolytes, they did not have much importance to Leylin, and their deaths weighed lighter than specks of dust in his heart.

As long as the opponent left irrefutable evidence of an attack, what were the deaths of a few acolytes? Also, these acolytes were under Celine's guidance. If he really wanted to gain complete control of the Nature's Alliance, more blood would have to be shed!

Now, however, it was time.

Gus and the rest of them had done so much damage to the Nature's Alliance that even if Leylin were to kill them all, it could be reasoned as self-defense.

This excuse may not be very good, but it was definitely better than having none! The acolytes that have died and the data that have been perished "Magus Gus! Why? Just why?"

Celine retracted her hands and looked at the barrier which was damaged by the combined attacks of the enemy. The guardian animal too was severely injured as it spat out blood, smiling bitterly.

"Benefits! Naturally, everything is for our own benefits!"

Gus' voice was ice cold, as if not having any of the emotions that a normal person would have. He had also turned a blind eye to Celine's charms.

"You hindered my path, and I just want to settle the dispute, that's all!"

Chapter 341: Ruthless Retaliation

“What gains are you referring to? I can give them up straight away!”

There was a glint in Celine’s eyes...

“This is your final chance! If this happened before the joint conference, I might have given it a thought, but now...”

Gus shook his head and said, “There is no further need for you to stall for time! There has been no Magus who has ever been able to survive after being hit by my Fog Giant’s self-detonation. Even if Leylin manages to survive the blow, he’s probably incapacitated unable to move a single muscle.”

Celine felt complete despair as her last hope was shattered.

“Get on with it!” She closed her eyes and exposed her pale neck.

“Where is Skrill?” Gus asked at the end while he formed a ball of distortion-filled with destructive energy.

“I have no idea. Leylin personally carried out the interrogation!”

“Then you are no longer of use!”

The indifferent Gus released the ball of distortion in his hands.

Pu! A layer of a black scaly shield appeared out of nowhere in front of Celine, and it managed to block the explosion from the attack.

After the smoke dissipated, a black-robed Magus had already appeared in front of Celine.

“Leylin!” Gus’ eyes widened in fear as he fearfully uttered the name.

“Tell me! How do you guys want to die?” The corners of Leylin’s lips curled into a vibrant smile.

“Do it!”

Gus’ face flushed red as he shouted.

“Double the amount! Bear in mind that it is double the amount!” The old man with a hawk nose beside him released large amounts of elemental

rings, forming a brass ring with mysterious runes on the surface.

While executing this attack, he did not forget to turn back and remind Gus about his remuneration.

Grey mist started to form immediately and the Fog Giant from their previous encounter appeared once again. Unlike the last time, rays of light which resembled starlight started to emerge from every Magus who was present and connected to the body of the giant, making the giant's aura rise to a frightening level.

The brass ring was thrown around the waist of the giant and it strapped tightly around it in that instant.

“Roar!”

The giant let out a devastating roar. While its lower body was shrinking non-stop, the mist on its upper body started to aggregate once again, and formed a body of muscle with a toughness that was as strong as granite.

“A combination spell!”

Celine, who was behind Leylin, couldn't help but to let out a sound at the sight. Even her breathing began to get rough.

“The opposing side has two peak rank 1 Magi, along with ten or so Magi elders. Meanwhile, Leylin...”

Celine had no time to process the thoughts in her head before her jaw dropped at the sight.

Silver!

A faint sliver of light started to appear on Leylin's body.

At this moment, even the air seemed to be frozen. An oppressive pressure could be felt descending onto the battlefield.

“Materialised spiritual force! A rank 2 Magus!”

The hawk-nosed old man made a strange sound. Despite bleeding profusely from his mouth and nose, the old man started to recall his spells, risking recoil in doing so while he retreated in haste.

It was a pity that this was all too late!

A pillar of silver light streaked across the sky and arrived at the top of the old man's head.

"No!" The old man exclaimed in anger, and an incomplete protection ruin on his neck exploded, resulting in an inferno of crimson flames.

Following that, the old man stopped in his tracks for a moment and nearly fell to the ground.

He had obviously felt the peak elemental spiritual force residing in the flames being instantly destroyed by the silver materialised spiritual force when the two forces collided.

As the spiritual force being manipulated was dispelled, the inferno of crimson flames lost sight of its target and began spreading to the surroundings.

The silver spiritual force soon descended down on its target. It formed a silver cross-shaped sword after having elongated and pierced the old man in the chest.

Drip! Drip!

The old man was bleeding profusely and droplets of blood could be seen dripping onto the ground. He tried humming, but no energy particles were triggered.

The solidified spiritual force of a rank 2 Magus far surpassed the spiritual force of an converted Magus in terms of quality. The spiritual force residing inside the old man's consciousness was no match for the silver spiritual force and was completely locked down with a single hit.

This rationale was very similar to what had happened to Leylin, when he had been confined by the Gargamel on the mountain of white bones.

After Leylin had completely recovered his rank 2 Magus power, even a peak rank 1 Magus was nothing more than a slightly stronger ant in Leylin's eyes.

"He...! He...! He...!"

The sight had the Magi from the Dense Fog Forest at a loss.

With just one single blow, the peak rank 1 Magus was on the verge of death! They had only heard of this kind of terrifying power in legends.

Gus' face started to turn pale from despair before it finally became a grim.

"Roar!" Under his manipulation, the gigantic Fog Giant ferociously charged in Leylin's direction.

Leylin started to slowly open an ancient scroll in his hands which was radiating with destructive energy that could be felt in the surroundings.

"Scorching Touch!" A bunch of red powder started to spill out, and two long and narrow energy beams which carried the destructive force of a rank 2 spell shot out from Leylin's hands. The fog giant was immediately scorched and two large holes were created from the attack.

Boom! A large amount of the mist started to dissipate and all the Magi who were connected to the mist giant started to collapse to the ground.

In the blink of an eye, Leylin appeared in front of Gus.

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!

While he was moving, several snow-white ice arrows were abruptly shot out.

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!

Confronted with the might of the arrows, the innate defensive spell formations of rank 1 Magi were shredded easily like pieces of paper. The heads of numerous Magi exploded, similar to watermelons exploding.

"You..."

At the sight of this unbearable scenario, even Gus, who was preparing a spell, could not help but feel anger and a sense of despair.

The number of rank 1 Magi that had died constituted almost half of the Dense Fog Forest's forces. All his efforts to accumulate this power all these years had gone down the drain as he lost 70 to 80% of his forces.

But at this moment, Gus had no time to think about this as Leylin arrived in front of him.

“Protection of Andes!” Gus shouted loudly and a colony of black ants emerged from his face, clothes, shoes and all over his body and formed a peculiar-looking black shield.

“A futile effort!” Leylin looked indifferent and raised his right hand.

A layer of black rays started to gather around his palm and formed a bunch of black scales. “Kemoyin’s Scale! Partial Snake Transformation!”

Po!

Leylin’s palms were filled with an enormous amount of energy which penetrated the shield. The colony of ants on the shield let out a shrill sound as they tried to gnaw at the black scales, but it was to no avail.

“Your last resort is just a scroll engraved by a rank 2 Magus? How disappointing!”

The silver ray of light in Leylin’s eyes started to shine brightly, and with his right hand, he grabbed Gus’ wrist.

Pak! The scroll, which was already triggered halfway, suddenly lost all its luster and revealed its true appearance of what seemed to be a broken piece of goatskin paper as it fell to the ground.

“Do you have any last words?”

Leylin asked Gus as he sealed his spiritual force.

“You will be punished by the joint conference. I swear on that!” Gus’ eyes turned red.

Pak! After which, his brain exploded, white brain juices, blood, and fluids spurting everywhere.

“Just this? How pointless! “

Leylin retracted his right hand.

He appeared in front of the hawk-nosed old man and placed his hands on the head of an old man who was on the verge of death.

“Do you choose death or subservience”?

The old man who was bleeding profusely and nearing death struggled to open his mouth. “I... I’m willing to be subservient to you, my lord!”

“Set a pact now and surrender a strand of your spirit source, or else you will end up like the others!”

The tone of Leylin’s voice was very indifferent, and the pile of corpses surrounding him made the old man have no thoughts of defying the order.

“I, Iren, am willing to serve under your command and become your most humble servant! Your future commands shall be my eternal mission!”

Even with his eyes blurred with tears, the old man still struggled to speak.

A fluctuating thread from the abyss was established between the two.

“Very good!” Leylin recalled the silver spiritual force that was restricting the old man.

“My lord!” Iren kneeled down to give his regards, the wounds on his body already beginning to heal on their own.

He had been restricted by Leylin and lost his ability to recover. Once he was freed from the silver spiritual force that was restricting him, there were far too many ways for Magi to heal themselves.

“Please accept your humble servant’s loyalty!” Although he had regained his freedom, the old man Iren had no desire to fight against Leylin as he had been deterred by Leylin’s actions.

With Iren’s words, a glowing spirit source floated out of his forehead and flew to Leylin’s hands.

After losing his spiritual source, Iren’s face turned pale and beads of sweat could be seen dripping down.

Leylin for his part kept the spirit source carefully.

A Magus’ spirit source was very important to them, and if Leylin were to destroy the source in his hands, the old man would suffer a severe blow

and might even die straight away. The best-case scenario would be for him to have a mental breakdown.

It could be said that once Leylin had the spirit source, it was akin to him holding the old man's fate in his hands.

"All good and done!" Leylin clapped his hands.

This kind of one-sided process and astonishing means from Leylin had made it difficult for Celine to process anything.

"My lord! You...." Celine had no idea of what to say.

"Have you ... ascended to rank 2?" She said this carefully after deliberating over it for a while.

"Yes!" Leylin happily smiled "The injury I suffered has, instead, made me break through the restraints to my meditation technique and allowed me to rise to the realm of rank 2."

Celine did not have the courage to continue probing despite knowing it was not the truth.

A rank 2 Magus! This was already a power that belonged to large-scale guilds! Facing this insurmountable gap in power, Celine could only accept whatever Leylin had to say.

"Wake those acolytes up and follow me!"

Leylin pointed to a few of the acolytes who were lying on the ground that included Obo and Ilya.

"Hm? What for?" Celine's face was filled with doubts.

"Naturally, it will be to retaliate!"

Leylin's face broke into a cold smile, "Since the opposing party has been so eager to find us, how can we not repay what they have done?"

"But.... The joint conference...."

Celine had only spoken a few words, but she decided to swallow the rest. At this moment, she had no other choice.

Chapter 342: Abyssal Breath

“My Lord! That’s the Dense Fog Forest’s headquarters!”

Old man Iren pointed to a fog-shrouded forest in the middle of the basin, with a look of respect on his face.

Currently, Iren was completely submissive to Leylin and existed as his servant.

Leylin walked behind him with conflicted feelings. Together with Obo, Ilya, and the other rank 3 acolytes, their faces were red with emotions.

Rank 2 Magus! Their famed professor was actually a rank 2 noble Magus who actually defeated a lot of enemies with just one blow!

They were proud of this kind of glory.

“The Dense Fog Forest is still a medium-scale guild, with an extremely strong Magi formation barrier. With several protected and contracted beings as the first line of defense, does this not mean that we are...”

Iren had revealed all of Gus’ defensive lines backhandedly.

“We do not need anything! I alone am sufficient. All of you keep in mind, without my orders, no one is allowed to step into the basin!”

Leylin’s face was stern. After which, he transformed into a gust of wind and disappeared in mid-air.

Ssiii

A sound could be heard as he travelled. Celine and the rest saw an illusory shadow of a snake appearing in mid-air. The huge snake forcefully appeared and seemed to transform into the face of a terrifying devil. The shape of the devil’s face seemed to resemble Leylin.

After half an hour passed they had obtained permission to enter the Dense Fog Forest, and they saw huge amounts of rotten corpses!

A few huge high-energy beings whose size resembled small mountains could also be seen dead on the floor, their corpses, not yet fully decomposed, had emitted an unpleasant smell.

“Your task is to completely search this area, and take away any resources that are of value!”

Leylin slowly landed on the corpse of a huge beast. That scene had made many absolutely horrified.

“Yes! Yes, My Lord!”

Initially, Celine had doubts over why Leylin had wanted to bring a batch of acolytes over. However, now she fully understood his intentions.

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After having searched the Dense Fog Forest, Leylin had arrived near the premises of the headquarters of the Eight-Clawed Spider guild.

This time around, Skrill appeared beside him.

If Leylin could subdue even Iren, naturally Skrill was not a big issue.

“Go! Announce that the Eight-Clawed Spider will be disbanded! And that all the Magi shall join Nature’s Alliance!” Leylin ordered Skrill.

“As you wish, my Lord!” Skrill bowed to Leylin, evidently afraid of him.

His fear was to the extent that he was willing to accept such orders.

With regards to the subsidiary guilds of the Dense Fog Forest, Leylin did not intend to exterminate all of them fully.

In any case, since they had no chance of knowing the Icy World’s secret, it would be for the best to subdue all of them to increase Nature’s Alliance’s strength.

Furthermore, all of the Dense Fog Forest Magi had been exterminated without any exceptions under Leylin’s rank 2 Magi spell that covered a vast area. There was no longer any living beings within the entire basin.

It could be said that the Dense Fog Forest guild had disappeared from the face of the earth.

Looking at the uproar from the guild headquarters, together with Iren and the people that went forth to subdue them, Leylin smiled icily.

“Next, perhaps it’s time for the rank 2 Magi?”

How long had it been since such a large-scale attack, and such a vile way of exterminating an entire guild, had happened in the entire eastern Twilight Zone?

No matter how dim-witted the large-scale guilds were, they would have to make a stand.

Moreover, according to the latest news, the dark elven empire was starting to become restless, and it was also nearing the time when the darkness creature horde beyond the Twilight Zone was approaching. It was precisely during this period of time where Magi were supposed to collaborate that Nature's Alliance's move could be said to be going against the tide.

"So what?"

Leylin's face revealed a smile that seemed to suggest that he did not care, "It is precisely because of this that I am making a move now!"

"The combining of forces to deal with external forces not only restricts the Nature's Alliance but all the other large-scale guilds as well!"

"Would they be willing to, under these conditions, lose a rank 2 Magus? How can the strength associated with a medium-scale guild measure up to a newly promoted rank 2 Magus? Furthermore, we still possess sufficient evidence to prove that the Dense Fog Forest had started the fight first, and had even encroached into our headquarters and caused a large number of casualties..."

With strength and evidence, even large-scale guilds would not act recklessly.

With regards to this, Leylin understood the logic very clearly.

After 10 minutes or so, Skrill and Iren returned.

"My Lord! The Eight-Clawed Spider guild has officially disbanded. This is our high-grade meditation technique—Abyssal Breath!"

Skrill respectfully half-knelt and passed a black crystal wand to Leylin.

"Mm. Well done!" Leylin took the wand gently, with a thread of his silver

spiritual force reaching into it.

Increasing the power of Nature's Alliance was only part of the reason why Leylin had destroyed the guilds. The main objective behind his actions was actually to collect the high-grade meditation techniques!

As time passed, Leylin frowned, which caused Skrill to start trembling.

"Only rank 3?" Leylin sighed. The Eight-Clawed Spider guild's meditation technique had the same flaws as Celine's Crystal Mask. Not only was it hard to develop, it was only rank 3.

This implied that the Magi from the Eight-Clawed Spider guild could at most be promoted to rank 3, and not beyond.

"I, your subordinate, am ashamed! Our high-grade meditation technique does only have 3 levels! Personally, I have been stuck at rank 1, and can only use the irrigation of the abyss' strength..."

Skrill lowered his head and quickly explained.

"Of course, I know!" Leylin knew that this Abyssal Breath mostly used the strength of the abyss to continuously change the body to adjust to a physical state more fitting to the abyss. Skrill's half-human half-spider appearance was the way it was due to the imitation of a special being from the abyss.

And this is merely rank 1 of the Abyssal Breath. According to the introduction of the meditation technique and the A.I. Chip's deductions, if one were to promote the meditation technique to its highest level, one would be able to return to their original state and have the physical appearance of a normal person.

Only then would the Magus, who had been entirely transformed by the abyss, be known as the spawn of the abyss!

But of course, these were only deductions made by the A.I Chip.

According to Leylin's estimations, to reach the state of the abyss' spawn, one would have to develop the Abyssal Breath higher than rank 5.

Honestly, one could not be sure whether the high-grade meditation

technique even had a rank 5.

“However, after all, this is a high-grade meditation technique and is a grade higher than the Crystal Mask. This can improve the A.I. Chip’s meditation techniques information database!”

Leylin kept the black crystal wand.

Because many ancient Magi were passionate about researching about all living beings in the world, they looked for patterns, obtained strength, and frequently interacted with beings of different realms. Hence, many ancient meditation techniques had a strong and strange aura.

With respect to the Abyssal Breath, Leylin estimated that it had a deep relationship with the abyssal world, and could even have been released by a strong and powerful being living within the abyss.

“Dense Fog Forest has other auxiliary guilds, namely 3 other small-scale guilds, and 15 unrated guilds. All of you shall break into 3 groups, Iren and Skrill will lead 2 groups to sweep the unrated guilds while I will be in charge of the small-scale guilds!”

Leylin immediately gave out his orders.

“As you wish, My Lord!” the surrounding Magi all bowed with respect.

Leylin nodded. Iren was a peak rank one magus, and Skrill was a semi-converted elemental Magus. To put them in charge to deal with the unrated guilds was a terrifying force to be reckoned with.

The unrated guilds did not stand a chance with the teams led by the two of them.

Furthermore, upon performing this deed, these newly subdued Magi would have no way out, and would only be able to come under Leylin’s wings.

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Several days later, explosive news spread across the entire Eastern Twilight Zone that caused a sensation in the Magi world, and even continued to spread in the 4 other zones.

After having existed for a few hundred thousand years, large amounts of contracted guardian beasts, countless official Magi, and even a peak rank 1 Magus that oversaw a medium-scale guild, the Dense Fog Forest, were entirely destroyed!

The one responsible for it was actually Nature's Alliance! This news had revealed that the honorary professor of Nature's Alliance had made a breakthrough to rank 2!

A peak rank 1 Magus was considered as a large power, while a rank 2 Magus was the goal of many official Magi, which were also known as the elites of the human forces!

Typically, a rank 2 Magi would only appear in large-scale guilds. The presence of the one or two old and experienced rank 2 Magi was that of the trump card of these guilds.

Nature's Alliance, on the other hand, was only a small-scale guild!

At this point in time, the entire eastern Twilight Zone was shocked.

Under Leylin's control, the actions of Nature's Alliance went extremely smoothly.

Not only did Nature's Alliance attack all of the Dense Fog Forest's auxiliary guilds and wiped out all traces of its history, many Magi had joined Nature's Alliance and enhanced its strength, such that it had been promoted to a medium-scale guild! These were all within Leylin's expectations.

Moreover, the taking over of the Dense Fog Forest's resources was also proceeding smoothly.

This, of course, was not in accordance with the rules set by the council members and had sparked their displeasure.

However, under Leylin's suppression, Nature's Alliance continued doing whatever they wanted to without any hesitation. The guild sent out many troops and their strength increased day after day.

With regards to small matters like the strength of the guild, Leylin could

not be bothered to oversee them and would casually instruct his acolytes to handle them.

The newly-joined Magi that were now part of Nature's Alliance were all given roles as professors or guest professors, but in actual fact, they would only listen to Leylin's bidding.

Celine's powers were suppressed to the maximum, but she could only force a smile, and could not complain much.

Leylin had suddenly been promoted to a rank 2 Magi, and just his strength alone would make Celine's previous plans prove futile. Furthermore, in terms of trickery, back in the southern coast the underhanded means that Leylin had employed did not pale in comparison to that Celine's.

Under these conditions, Celine could only give up.

Due to her special status, other official Magi would still be slightly respectful towards her and would not reject her requests towards small matters.

Furthermore, these Magi were still under Nature's Alliance, even if only in name, which gave Celine some comfort.

Chapter 343: Dragon King's Mystic Might

Nature's Alliance headquarters.

The headquarters had now undergone renovations. The reconstruction had started from the bottom, with magic spells fixed up and the acolytes who had died in battle buried.

Powerful energy fluctuations were concealed within these few building structures. They were like multiple stars aiming to bring out the moon, crowding around a laboratory right in the centre.

Whether it was the original acolytes of Nature's Alliance or the newly-joined Magi, they would always unconsciously slow their footsteps when they passed by and exhibit their respect.

In the middle of the laboratory.

Leylin stood by a table, deep in thought while gazing at the few items on the silver desk.

These ten or so items were very simple. There were green leaves, red earrings, a short brown rod, and even the black crystals that Skrill had previously given him.

The silver surface of the table was made using a special alloy. It was incomparably hard and had a high resistance against specific magic experiments. Hence, it was widely used in this area.

Currently, the shining, sparkling metallic surface reflected Leylin's troubled expression.

These were naturally the numerous high-grade meditation techniques Leylin had forcefully obtained.

Though the Twilight Zone had obtained a larger number of complete inheritances from the ancient Magi, high-grade meditation techniques weren't anything common. Some unrated guilds only had the simplified versions that had been altered based on incomplete high-grade meditation techniques, which were completely useless to Leylin.

There were also a few guilds who had the same high-grade meditation technique as the Dense Fog Forest. However, they only had the first or second levels, and these were slightly modified. Leylin could immediately recognise this.

These guilds must have been the Magi guilds that had split up from the original Dense Fog Forest.

This was not uncommon. It was not unusual for Magi in the Twilight Zone to split up based on differences in opinion while still having a good relation with the original guild. This was somewhat similar to a branch of the original guild.

Hence, though Leylin had technically destroyed ten or so guilds, what Leylin actually gathered were only six high-grade meditation techniques.

Of course, the rate of advancing was much higher here than in the south coast, but Leylin was still in a bad mood.

This was because out of the six high-grade meditation techniques, there were five that were incomplete!

This was not something that could be explained just by the chaos of war. Only after checking some documents regarding this guild did Leylin gather a more reasonable explanation.

In ancient times, the inheritance of high-grade meditation techniques was not open to everyone in one go.

Only one or two levels would be passed down at a time, and only after Magi succeeded would they gradually be passed down more.

This was to ensure the secrecy of the high-grade inheritances. The other reason was to prevent Magi from seeking instant returns.

However, after the fall of the ancient Magi in the final war, there appeared a huge problem—a discontinuity in the passing down of meditation techniques! The higher-ranked Magi had fallen before they could pass down the other portions of their meditation techniques, which had resulted in the Magi of the Twilight Zone being unable to advance further.

The level of Morning Star Magus was the bare-minimum requirement to participate in the final war, and hence, the high-grade meditation techniques left in the Twilight Zone mostly had two or three levels, and there was a lack of information on the essential later portions.

In ancient times, rank 2 and rank 3 Magi were considered to have just finished their apprenticeships, and as such, they were naturally not required to enter the battle. They had survived and passed down their meditation techniques.

However, it wasn't as if there were no surprises.

Leylin extended his hand and picked up something like a part of a white bone joint from the table.

Though it had an interesting appearance, this was actually a tool used for storing information. Leylin connected his spiritual force to it and information about a high-grade meditation technique appeared.

Ancient symbols appeared at the beginning of the meditation technique, emitting an ancient aura. There was even the sound of a dragon's roar.

"Dragon King's Mystic Might! High-grade meditation technique for Dragon Magi split into four levels—Infant Dragon, Young Dragon, Adult Dragon, Elder Dragon!" Leylin slowly read through the content regarding this high-grade meditation technique.

In ancient times, 'Magus' was a term that was inclusive of all powerful beings, whether they were of other races, humans, or even high-energy creatures. As long as they possessed intelligence had strength, and pursued the truth, they could all come under the umbrella of being a Magus!

This Dragon King's Mystic Might was obviously a high-grade meditation technique meant for the Dragon race to train in!

"Based on the A.I. Chip's estimations, as well as a few illustrations from Dragon King's Mystic Might, creatures of the dragon race, would accelerate their growth rate if they trained in this high-grade meditation technique. They would develop twice as fast as their peers, and would

enter the sequence of being a mature dragon earlier...”

Leylin unhurriedly caressed this bone.

This Dragon King’s Mystic Might was what the Dense Fog Forest had in storage, but it was a pity that this was merely a decoration for Dense Fog Forest, as it was comprised of only humans.

This was a high-grade meditation that was meant for another race and was unsuitable for the human body. Even Warlocks that had the bloodline of dragons could not do this!

However, after Leylin discovered this Dragon King’s Mystic Might, it was like he had gained a treasure.

Though he could not train this technique either, he could see the traces of a new bloodline in this high-grade meditation technique.

Similar to the Kemoyin’s Pupil, the Dragon King’s Mystic Might was a high-grade meditation technique that had very stringent requirements in terms of bloodline. It was probably even more strict than the Kemoyin’s Pupil.

This would be of immense help to him in completing the next few parts of Kemoyin’s Pupil.

The Kemoyin’s Pupil that Leylin had acquired only had three levels and lacked the most important part, which was a description about the Morning Star Realm at the fourth rank. Dragon King’s Mystic Might could be used to make up for this.

In addition, the other high-grade meditation techniques had their unique features, which could be used to improve the A.I. Chip’s database.

No matter how different they were, they were high-grade meditation techniques and had to have some similarities. This was what Leylin was going to rely on to complete Kemoyin’s Pupil and Sacred Flame.

“Even so, the last few portions of the Dragon King’s Mystic Might are missing!”

Leylin felt a little regretful.

He still wanted to know what was after the fourth level of the Dragon King's Mystic Might.

“In ancient tales, after the Elder Dragon were the Ancient Dragons, top creatures that could contend against great rank 5 Magi! And after that, there were the beings that only existed in legends—the Immemorial Dragons! However, the Dragon King's Mystic Might lacks content after the fourth level.”

Leylin looked at the description of the fourth level of the Dragon King's Mystic Might. “The Morning Star realm for humans is equivalent to the Elder Dragon in our Dragon race. At this position, the power of domain has penetrated into our bones, and our dragon might have also been developed to the limit. In addition, all our spiritual force, magic power, physical strength and even bloodline will, under influence of some rules, concentrate into ‘point mass’. This point mass is what humans call ‘Morning Star’, and what we call a ‘Dragon Crystal’.”

“So at the Morning Star realm, it is where Magi pathways will become condensed. All creatures of the Magus World at this realm are all the same. Point mass formed from hundreds and thousands of energy all can refine one's strength. Hence, there is a difference like that between heaven and the earth between Morning Star and rank 3 Magi.”

Leylin gradually understood.

In his mind, the A.I. Chip constantly recorded information regarding high-grade meditation techniques to fill its database.

After goodness knows how long, a prompt from the A.I. Chip appeared in Leylin's mind. [Beep! Recording of six high-grade meditation techniques complete. Dragon King's Mystic Might, Abyssal Breath... Completeness of high-grade meditation techniques at 14.7%, beginning to infer actual level of the meditation technique...]

Following this, the Magi strength chart in Leylin's database experienced some changes.

On top of the rank 1 and rank 2 Magi, information regarding rank 3 Magi constantly generated. This was the most accurate information the

A.I. Chip had gathered after doing simulations with multiple high-grade meditation techniques.

[Beep! Requirements to advance from a rank 2 Magus: Spiritual force reaches the boundary of 200, solidification 100%. Paired with the momentum from the essence of the Wisdom Tree, probability of advancing to rank 3: 46.9%.]

“I’m a Warlock, so I have an added requirement from my blood. However, my bloodline directly came from a Giant Kemoyin Serpent at the Morning Star, rank 4 level and completely fits the requirements. It even aids me when my rank is too low!”

“In addition, having almost a 50% chance is not a low percentage! It’s no wonder Alistair had made his move and did not hesitate to betray his faction!”

Leylin touched his chin.

The conditions that the A.I. Chip inferred were based on the most regular Magi that trained in high-grade meditation techniques. This meant he was not included in there.

“A.I. Chip, if I use myself as a model, what are my chances of advancing to a rank 3 Warlock?” Leylin asked silently.

Immediately after, a virtual 3D image that looked similar to Leylin was projected in front of him, and large amounts of information streaked through.

[Chances of Host body advancing to rank 3 Warlock: 61.72%!]

This was with the added bonus from the Giant Kemoyin Serpent Bloodline. It was a matured body that had reached the Morning Star Realm. To break through rank 2, it was still able to provide an impetus.

“Looks like breaking through is not an issue. The most important part is to accumulate more spiritual force!”

Leylin suddenly sighed, looking at his data.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent.

Strength: 21.1, Agility: 14.4, Vitality: 27.9, Spiritual force: 104.3, Magic power: 104 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force).]

The injury to his sea of consciousness had only recently healed, and during the time where he had solidified his spiritual force, rather than improving, it was already very fortunate that he was able to maintain his strength.

It was for this reason that the numbers for his spiritual force did not rise.

Now, with the repairs to his sea of consciousness completed, his spiritual force could increase once more.

Leylin couldn't help but ask, "A.I. Chip, based on my current speed, how long will it take me to be able to meet the requirements to advance?"

A few minutes passed, and the A.I. Chip gave an answer. [Host body is estimated to reach the limit after 200 years, 12 days and 13 hours.]

"That long?" Leylin's eyes widened.

He had increased his lifespan after advancing to become a bloodline Warlock, and after rank 2, he could live past 500 years, but 200 years! That was an extremely long period!

Chapter 344: Rank 3 Magus

One property of high-grade meditation techniques was that they tended to get harder to cultivate towards higher cultivation levels.

Typically, many Magi would not be able to wait for their meditation techniques to be promoted because they tended to die of old age before their meditation techniques could be cultivated to a higher level.

This was why Magi were all passionate about collecting data since they wanted to increase the pace of the cultivation of their meditation techniques.

“Hu...” Leylin let out a long breath.

“Looks like it is imperative that I use potions or other methods to hasten the pace of the increase in the level of my meditation cultivation. 200 years is way too long!”

There were many differences between the resources of the Twilight Zone and of the south coast; perhaps it would be possible to find spiritual force potions suitable for a rank 2 Warlock. Leylin remained confident in the resources that the Twilight Zone possessed.

[Beep! Rank 3 Magi simulation data has been completed. Completion level: 69.24%]

The A.I Chip intoned. Behind the data on rank 2 Magi, a new data was quickly generated.

[Rank 3 Magi, estimated spiritual force: between 200-400! There are three stages in the spiritual force: vapour, liquid and crystal forms. The differences in strength between every rank is estimated to be between 3 to 5 times!]

The A.I Chip projected a large paragraph of information before Leylin.

“Towards the end, the spiritual force span within one rank will be of a large amount and is terrifyingly difficult to achieve!”

Leylin sighed.

An acolyte's spiritual force was within 20 degrees, whereas that of a rank 1 Magus was between 20 and 80, that of a rank 2 Magus between 80 to 200, and upon reaching rank 3 the spiritual force was between 200 to 400.

The larger the spiritual force span, the more obvious the differences between the displayed strength.

As a result, newly promoted rank 3 Magi and rank 3 Magi with crystallised spiritual force would have an unimaginable difference in strength.

After understanding the strength of the rank 3 Magi, Leylin had recognised the formidability of a Morning Star Magi.

He had known vaguely that rank 3 Magi would enter a very long transmutation transformation period. Should the Magi be promoted successfully, they would have a rank equivalent to that of a Magus from ancient times!

"That makes sense! Even in ancient times, Morning Star Magi were the rulers of a region and hence could have had a role in the Final War. How can it be so easy to level up one's rank?"

Leylin stroked his chin "Only through the continuous concentration of the spiritual force, can it crystallise and turn into point mass, before promoting to a Morning Star Magi!"

At this moment, the path that a Morning Star Magus took had appeared in its entirety within Leylin's mind.

First, the elemental essence conversion. Only when the elemental essence conversion had reached 80% were Magi qualified enough to transform their essence and be promoted to rank 2.

Upon promotion to rank 2, all spiritual force would have to have a substance form, appearing as the smallest spiritual force particles!

„

These spiritual force particles, upon approaching rank 3 would gradually

be condensed. Through the three stages of vapour, liquid, and crystal, they would condense further to form point mass!

At this point in time, these Magi would have entered the Morning Star level!

“The path of a Magus is indeed getting tougher! Merely 80% of elemental essence conversion would easily kill many Magi. Needless to say, the barrier at the end would be an even more difficult task!”

Leylin exhaled deeply. “Thankfully my path ahead is clear, I only have to follow the path accordingly!”

“A.I Chip. Set up a long-term mission: Deduce what happened to Kemoyin’s Pupil and Sacred Flame!”

Leylin immediately ordered.

The A.I Chip automatically projected two progress charts that deduced the mission progress. The progress had not even reached that of 1% and had been increasing incredibly slowly, but at least Leylin could see hope.

Amongst these, Kemoyin’s Pupil was the main meditation technique that Leylin was cultivating and was the path that he had decided to take a long time ago, and as such, it could not be easily changed.

On the other hand, Leylin had gained interest in Sacred Flame, the meditation technique that had its roots from the prophetic Botelli family.

Even after having accumulated so many high-grade meditation techniques, from what Leylin could see, the value of Sacred Flame was above that of the other meditation techniques, and could even be on par with that of the Dragon King Mystic Might due to its ability to predict the future. This ability was honestly a tad too terrifying. Even though there was the possibility of errors, Leylin still longed for it.

“Based on the A.I Chip’s deductions and information database on high-grade meditation techniques, one day it will be able to prophesize things. Of course, if I am able to continuously add in new high-grade meditation techniques, the process will be accelerated...”

Leylin was very clear on this line of reasoning.

Boom

Suddenly, a wave of invisible spiritual force passed through numerous barriers and exploded next to Leylin.

“Is it finally here?” Leylin’s eyes revealed a hint of a smile, and he immediately flicked his hand.

The numerous high-grade meditation techniques had disappeared after a silver flash, and Leylin turned into a phantom before arriving in front of Nature’s Alliance’s headquarters.

Following the directions of a thread of spiritual force, Leylin arrived at a location.

This area was originally a wasteland, but in the middle of it now lay a silver-white metallic building.

Leylin went up to the door and raised his hands with the intentions to knock.

Ka-cha

But before Leylin had transformed his thoughts into action, both steel doors, decorated with floral patterns, had opened automatically and revealed the interior of the building.

In the middle of the huge living room sat an old man on a steel chair who smiled gently at Leylin.

“Distinguished Leylin! You have indeed been promoted to a rank 2 Magus!” The old man stood up and smiled while having given up his seat.

This Magus wore burlap clothes and had an average appearance, like that of an ordinary old man, but Leylin had not dared be brazen in front of him.

“I’m lucky to have advanced a little further on the path in search of the truth!”

Leylin appeared extremely humble. From this old man, Leylin could feel

that he had a deep solidified spiritual force that had surpassed his own accumulation.

Of course, having a high spiritual force was one thing, but having the actual strength was another. Leylin, had, in addition, the strength of his bloodline and a few other hidden trump cards, did not think he would be at a disadvantage, but felt no need to show his abilities.

“Hahaha... Please take a seat! You still don’t know my name, do you? I’m Logan, the Melhawk Guild’s leader!”

Logan beamed and introduced himself.

“Magus Logan, the protector of the Eastern Twilight Zone, I have long heard of your name!” Leylin smiled and replied, and at the same time sat down on a chair.

“Eh?” Though the chair’s exterior still had the glow of steel, it did not have the hardness of one and instead felt like a sofa that had caved into a certain arch. It comfortably supported Leylin’s body.

“How’s that? This is a steel lifeform I had specially acquired from the external zones!”

Logan revealed a smile as he observed Leylin’s expression.

“Not bad!” Leylin indifferently evaluated the chair. Though this steel lifeform could not compare to the organisms entirely constructed from the elements of the Steel World, this was already very hard to come by.

“If I’m not wrong this entire room is a huge steel lifeform, right? And we are currently speaking to its body?”

“Haha! ‘Dark Steel’ has an innate gift in concealing its life aura. You are the first person to be able to guess this so quickly!” Logan chuckled, and hit the table top, “Dark Steel, come and say hello!”

Ka Cha Ka Cha

The steel flowed like liquid and formed a rough face on the table top.
“Hello, Mister Leylin!”

At this point, because there was no need for Dark Steel to hide anymore,

Leylin could clearly feel a wave of energy that was of a certain standard. Should it be a Magi, it would be of peak rank 1.

After conversing for some time, Logan entered the main topic.

“Magus Leylin, I think you should be clear about my intentions, no?” At this point in time, the old man’s face became more solemn.

“Of course!” Leylin nodded his head.

“In that case, with regards to the matter of Nature’s Alliance Guild violating the rules and exterminating the Dense Fog Forest Guild, and subduing all other subsidiary small-scale guilds, what is your explanation?”

Logan glared at Leylin as if he would make a move on Leylin should he say something not conforming to what Logan expected to hear.

“With regards to this?” Leylin smiled mildly and took a step back, his fingers crossed, and seemed to be very uneasy.

“The Dense Fog Forest first robbed and killed us, then barged into Nature’s Alliance’s headquarters and engaged in so much killing that they almost exterminated the Nature’s Alliance guild. As a result, out of self-defence, we naturally retaliated. If I remember correctly, shouldn’t this be in accordance with Eastern Twilight Zone’s laws for revenge?”

Leylin continued smiling and passed the crystal ball with Celine’s previous records to Logan. “Furthermore, we have eyewitnesses as well. If you would like to hear the words from one of them, you can leave with me now to meet him...”

“But the dark elven empire is left running amok, and the tide of darkness creatures is approaching. Distinguished Leylin, aren’t you being too reckless? If you were to just showcase your abilities, Gus would probably surrender...”

Upon receiving the crystal ball, Logan did not immediately look into it, but the gloomy clouds on his face had dissipated to a large extent, though his brows were still furrowed.

“He offended me! The dignity of a rank 2 Magi!”

Leylin squinted his eyes, the atmosphere suddenly became tenser. “He almost interrupted my promotion. Only by offering all his blood, will it be enough to cleanse his sins!”

“Are these all the excuses that you have?” Logan looked right into Leylin’s eyes.

“These are all facts! Not excuses!” Leylin retorted without restraint.

Two rays of silver glow seemingly collided in mid-air and produced a crisp sound.

“Haha....”

All of a sudden, Logan’s face revealed a smile, resolving the tension in the atmosphere.

“Since the opponent started it first, and offended you, then I would have nothing else to say...”

“Thank you for your understanding and support!”

Leylin smiled respectfully.

All of these were actually within his calculations. After all, Magi were all smart people, especially the more so the older one gets!

A medium-scale guild or a rank 2 Magi, this decision did not need deliberation to choose between!

Chapter 345: 3 Years

The Magus world was extremely pragmatic; no one would make life difficult for a rank 2 Magus just for a guild that was already exterminated.

Given that the demise of Nature's Alliance would benefit quite a few other guilds, if Dense Fog Forest still had survivors who could repeatedly report them and collude with the authorities, there would have been a small bit of hope. However, Leylin had directly uprooted them. Under the massive Toxic Bile attack on their headquarters, not even a dog had survived. Thus, this matter had been met with little resistance.

This was another reason why Leylin had to exterminate the headquarters of Dense Fog Forest, not only to protect the secret of the Icy World.

Since the way forward had been decided, the other matters were much easier to take care of. Hence, Logan immediately remarked, "In that case, the joint conference will handle this situation appropriately. Dense Fog Forest's remaining strength should also be handed over to another guild!"

"Don't worry, I'll get Nature's Alliance on the path to becoming a medium-scale guild once I go back. However, will the council members cooperate?" Leylin asked. Eastern Twilight Zone's joint conference was held once every 20 years, and the current one had just ended.

"That's not a problem! The nine enforcers can make an exception for you, but the matter would still have to be presented at the next joint conference for the sake of formality!" Logan waved his hand.

"That'll work!" Leylin immediately returned the favour saying, "For the upcoming wave of Dark Creatures as well as the looming threat of the Dark Elven Empire, I will help with the defence. After all, I'm a part of the human race as well!"

After being reassured by Leylin, Logan chuckled, the wrinkles on his face smoothing out.

"In that case, Leylin, since you're a newly promoted rank 2 Magus, you

must have many new perspectives and enlightenments. Now is a good time for us to discuss our viewpoints!”

Logan beamed, and with a flick of his hands, the steel table folded inwards, and two cups of steaming, warm, beverage floated up.

“I’m extremely honoured. I too have many questions pertaining to meditation techniques that I wish to consult Mister Logan on!” Leylin said, smiling and raising his cup.

A few hours later, Leylin left Logan’s estate. After he left, the exterior of the steel building immediately changed. The four thick legs on the steel building stretched out, and the building slowly moved away.

Meanwhile, at the side, Leylin’s mouth revealed a smile which showed his good mood.

This time around, not only did this move help prevent any future troubles, the experiences Magus Logan offered to him were all very useful. Because he had experienced a rapid advancement into a rank 2 Warlock, he had lacked some understanding in regards to rank 2, especially in regards to the path of pursuing the truth!

Even though these things did not look very important right now, they would definitely create a lot of inconvenience for him when he attempted to condense the point mass as a rank 3 Magus.

Now, there was a chance to remedy this.

Moreover, Leylin’s depth of knowledge, acquired from the accumulation of information from a different part of the world, greatly surprised Logan. The insight he had gained from this exchange was no less than Leylin’s.

.....

Ever since Leylin had returned, Nature’s Alliance’s strength had reached a new peak. Rapidly, all the remaining factions within the Dense Fog Forest was absorbed, and the influence of Nature’s Alliance had even spread its net even wider.

Regarding these actions, the joint conference enforcers turned a blind

eye; they eventually even produced a formal letter that openly announced Nature's Alliance's promotion to a medium-scale guild, a move which left many Magi dumbfounded.

Through the development during this period, Nature's Alliance had broken through from a declining small-scale guild to a peak medium-scale guild! After all, with a rank 2 Magus like Leylin overseeing the guild, it could be considering as a trump card that could surpass most medium-scale guilds.

However, Leylin obviously knew Logan's bottom line.

The nine existing large-scale guilds had already stretched the resources of eastern Twilight Zone to their limits; the remaining resources were insufficient to support the birth of yet another. Leylin had no intentions of vying to make Nature's Alliance a large-scale guild, and hence Nature's Alliance finally stopped growing and began to consolidate their strength, which left many Magi heaving a sigh of relief.

Honestly, Nature's Alliance's expansion this time was way too aggressive and depended solely on Leylin's powers. The guild's foundations were very unstable.

However, after passing this period, everything they took in would have been assimilated, and their abilities would naturally improve as a whole!

As the ceremonial guild leader, Celine had been so busy lately that no one knew of her whereabouts.

Leylin was far too busy to care about tangible powers. Hence, since Celine was the original guild leader and as someone who shared an intimate relationship with Leylin, she had obtained a great portion of this power.

At this point in time, Celine was full of gratitude for Leylin.

Nature's Alliance had once again achieved glory under Celine's leadership, and the extent of its success exceeded that of the past. If her mentors knew about this, they would have been very pleased.

Leylin did not care about any of this. After the situation had more or less

stabilised, he continued staying in the headquarters of Nature's Alliance and sank into the deciphering of high-grade meditation techniques along with his own cultivation.

No matter what resources and materials he required, an instruction to his subordinates was all it took for them to be collected immediately and sent to him. Hence, Leylin became even more reclusive.

He could feel that he had improved at a pace that was way too fast, and hence, he needed to reinforce his foundations for a while. As a result, he chose to enter seclusion.

Time passed bit by bit without anyone noticing.

.....

Three years later, the borders of eastern Twilight Zone.

At the outskirts of a small town stood a small wooden house. Some animal skins were hung on the walls of the house, which attracted many envious stares.

Many townspeople passing by would greet the female owner of the house through the walnut wood fence.

“Good morning, Madam Ginny!”

“Good morning Aunt Veeya!” Currently, Jenny had already grown to become a mature woman, her face revealing more of the charm of a young lady, while she smiled and conversed with the lady at her side.

After Aunt Veeya had left, Jenny looked at the burlap clothes she wore, and the basket of wheat bread in her hands; her face revealed that she was distracted.

“How time flies! Three years have passed just like that!” Jenny muttered to herself. It must have been 1 or 2 years since she had defected from her family, and it had been another year since she had escaped with Baelin to this place, and changed her name to Ginny.

Initially, when she had decided to elope with Baelin and was escaping the Argus Family's assassination attempts, they had encountered

numerous dangers during their journey. Thankfully, Baelin was already a Grand Knight, and hence they reached the peak of commoners' lives. In addition, Jenny was an acolyte with the knowledge and experience of nobility. After escaping the incessant pursuit of soldiers and the many dangers nature had in store, Jenny finally crossed the border and arrived unharmed.

Although this small town was positioned at the border of the eastern Twilight Zone and was extremely remote, it was considered a safe location and no one had ever called on them.

"But..." Jenny gritted her teeth. Vengeance for her father! Her own hatred! Was she to just give up on them?

After several chaotic memories came to mind, Jenny unknowingly clenched her fists, until a voice roused her.

"I'm back! Do you want to see what I got?" Baelin, who was wearing a hunter's outfit and carrying a bow and arrows, dramatically raised the pot in his hand.

"Yellow oil! This is high-grade yellow oil! I exchanged a grey-toothed snake for it! If you spread it on bread, it's something that even royalty might not be able to enjoy!"

"You!" Jenny rolled her eyes and led Baelin into the house.

Though the house was not big, all necessities had been provided through Baelin's capabilities. Even though they had to maintain a low profile, they were still living better than commoners.

In regards to the lives they were leading now, Baelin was naturally very content, but Jenny seemed to have other ideas.

After the door was closed shut, Jenny solemnly turned her head around.

"We need to leave!"

"Leave? Why? The environment here is so good!" Baelin was at a loss. Immediately after, his face tightened. "Could it be that the men from your family have tracked us down?"

“No! It’s war! The horde of darkness creatures is approaching soon, and the Dark Elven Empire might even commence their attack!”

Jenny smiled wryly. “You haven’t discovered anything after all the constant hunting you’ve been doing?”

“Now that you mention it, there does seem to be something like this!” Baelin rubbed his head. “Currently, the number of Dark Creatures has increased by a large amount. A few days ago I was chased by a giant wolf that was the size of a hill for almost an entire day!”

“Now you understand! With regards to the horde of darkness creatures, towns like ours are the least safe. Any small wave of attacks will be able to demolish the town. We have to move closer to the central region, or even the capital before we are safe from them!”

“But!” Baelin scratched his head, “I’m worried about our identities...”

“Although the Argus Family has very deep connections within the eastern regions, we are in the northern region, where they have much less influence. Don’t worry, there won’t be any problems!”

Jenny comforted him on the surface, yet she was not too confident on the inside. What she said only applied to regular humans; she had no confidence if the powers of Magi were involved.

Even if that was the case, they still needed to move!

Jenny was extremely aware of the looming threat of the horde of darkness creatures. Baelin was just a Grand Knight, even with her might as a level 2 acolyte, they would only be swept away by that force.

However, with her drive to survive and encouragement from her hatred, Jenny had advanced into a level 2 acolyte in these three years, and could now cast rank 0 spells with some effort.

“Alright, I’ll leave it to you then!” Baelin smiled boorishly. “However, can’t we leave in two days? Uncle Veeya’s birthday is approaching, we have to at least congratulate him before setting off!”

Aunt and Uncle Veeya were a couple in the small town that had played a

huge role in Baelin and Jenny's settlement here. Hence, no matter what, Baelin had wished to leave the town after the birthday celebration.

"Two days is doable!"

Jenny bit her lips. Large-scale battles often took a long time to prepare, so two days was not a significant amount.

However, it was regretful that, sometimes, the events in the world have anomalies.

For those in northern Twilight Zone, the Wheel of Fate was beginning to slowly turn...

Chapter 346: A Coincidence

On a dark field, a group of cavalry chased after a lone figure.

The fleeing figure was a strange sight. He floated a few metres above the ground and had a pair of white translucent wings sprouting from his back. Each flap of these wings propelled him forward a great distance.

Behind the winged figure was a group of knights chasing after it! These knights rode on large spiders, each with eight brown, clawed legs. There were also icy blue stripes on them, and their eyes shone with bloodlust.

These were Underground Winter Spiders, the mounts of elite dark elves.

The knights riding on these spiders were not humans, but tall, slim creatures with exquisite skin; they had beautiful androgynous contours on their faces, with sharp ears and silver eyes that granted them vision in the dark.

Bang! The figure that was escaping in front suddenly turned his head, which revealed his handsome features and pointed ears, before he started chanting something undecipherable while swinging his arms backwards.

Five crimson red fireballs were fired out of his palm but were all dodged by the Underground Winter Spiders, exploding on the ground.

Surprisingly, the escaping figure was a dark elf as well!

“They really think highly of me huh, even sending the Underground Winter Spider knights after me!” The silhouette continued to escape but was unable to break away from the knights chasing after him.

Not only could these Underground Winter Spiders move at an incredible speed, they could crawl over any terrain, regardless of whether it was in mountains, fields or even the misty canyons. Their advance could not be stopped.

“Memphis! How dare you betray the glory of the Dark Lord? I will make you suffer, and offer your head as a sacrifice to the matriarch!”

The knight in charge wore a thin layer of leather armour. The

Underground Winter Spider below him was a bit larger than the ones around it, and its upper body was covered with golden stripes.

He inhaled deeply, and the Underground Winter Spider increased its speed. Immediately after, he aimed his bow and shot an arrow that flew elegantly, the arrowhead containing a secret, constantly-glowing rune.

Zoom!

A black ray of light emitted out of his hand, piercing through the sky and eventually landing on Memphis' back!

“Ahh!”

A fiery red barrier of light appeared behind Memphis' body, but when the arrow came into contact with the shield, the barrier could not even last a second and shattered instantly.

The black arrow continued its flight, and with its unknown strength pierced Memphis from behind, protruding out of his chest.

Memphis screamed, and the glowing arrow in his back disappeared. He collapsed to the ground, his flowing blood forming a pool of red streaked with silver.

Hiss Hiss!

The knights in the front surrounded him.

“Cut off his head!” The knight in charge heartlessly said and motioned to his men, resulting in two of his men walking up.

At this moment, the expression on the knight's face changed. “No! Fall back!”

But it was too late.

Bang!

A strong wave of energy emanated from the body of Memphis, who was suddenly holding a scroll.

Two huge balls of light were shot out, and the two approaching knights were burnt to ashes, creating a huge cloud of smoke and dust.

After waiting for the aftermath of the explosion to subside, the knight in charge stepped forward with an irritated look on his face, but by that moment Memphis had already disappeared from the ground.

“Find him for me!” His face contorted in anger. “He has been injured by my curse; he will not be able to travel far!”

.....

Baelin aimed with his crossbow, and it cut through the air with a swoosh, hitting the wild boar in front of him.

The wild boar squealed loudly, bleeding nonstop, but all Baelin did was to pull his crossbow bolt out.

“Haha! Uncle, Baelin’s present is here!”

After a fierce battle, Baelin smiled slightly while looking at the beast lying on the floor.

At this moment, a silhouette appeared from the other side of the battle field.

“Eh? Who is this?”

Baelin walked up, and the silhouette turned around, revealing a handsome white face....

Two hours later, Jenny was on her way home when she saw the dark elf that Baelin brought back. Putting her hand on her forehead, she groaned in despair and shouted, “You idiot! We’ve already offended the higher-ups and caused enough trouble.....”

Hearing Jenny’s complaints, Baelin innocently touched his head “I had no choice, seeing how pitiful he looks.....”

“Pitiful? Do you know what that is? It’s a dark elf! He is a purebred dark elf!”

Jenny’s face was flushed.

“This may be the border, but if you bring a dark elf, it could bring so much trouble to the town!”

In these recent three years, the Dark Elven Kingdom had frequently caused much insecurity and restlessness among the people!

Just with one look at the dark elf's luxurious clothing, Jenny only had one thought, and that was whether or not the dark elf was like her, a member of nobility on the run because of a failed power struggle.

Thinking about this connection, Jenny started to break out into a cold sweat.

Regarding the cruelty of power struggles, she finally understood and knew that regardless of where this Elf hid, in the end, it would just be extending an endless cycle of fleeing and being hunted down. On top of this, her own people would suffer the consequences!

Thinking up to here, her eyes flashed with ferocity, but could only sigh when she saw the confused and helpless Baelin. Her tone also changed to one that was milder.

"Whatever happens, we must send him away quickly. I'm sure you don't want to cause Aunt and Uncle Veeya any more trouble, right?"

Baelin scratched his head. "Oh, alright!"

.....

At Baelin's former hunting ground, a bunch of Underground Winter Spider knights surrounded a pit where Memphis the dark elf was concealed.

A small Underground Winter Spider that was no bigger than a dog placed one foot into the cave, and then clicked at the knights.

"He said that aside from Memphis', a human's scent was found"

"Human?" the expression on the leader's face sank, but then he suddenly started laughing maliciously. "No wonder Memphis is well known for peace! He has already been making connections with the humans"

He gestured to his men, "Follow them. I don't care who dares to protect him, I want to chop their heads off personally as sacrificial offerings!"

"Yes my Lord!"

The Underground Winter Spider knights responded in order. The relationship between the people of the Dark Elven Kingdom and Twilight Zone was not the best. Crossing the border by a little bit was not such a big issue, but currently, it looked as if a new war was about to break out. Even so, they could still kill a few more men, steal their food, and enslave their women!

At this point in time, the eyes of many Underground Winter Spider knights flashed red.

An hour later, a horse wagon pulled by an old, slow, horse.

Baelin was guiding the horse, while Jenny was lying on a pile of straw with the dark elf that Baelin had previously saved.

The elf's clothes were cut open at the front, revealing a skinny body. His delicate chest was marred by an arrow wound bordered by a black aura, shaped like a spider and continually expanding.

"How is he?" Baelin turned to ask.

"The external injuries are almost healed, but a curse was cast on him, and I do not have any ideas or methods to cure it!" Jenny raised her hands.

Although this injury was shocking, what surprised Jenny even more was the Elf's vitality, which had allowed him to persevere and survive this long while suffering from the combination of such a serious injury and curse.

"The more that I think about it, the more I feel that this is not such a good idea. Judging from the curse, it is obvious that there is an official Magus after this fellow. If we do this, we will definitely infuriate his opponents!"

Jenny's face turned gloomy.

Upon hearing that, Baelin could not help but tremble—this was an instinct that had been cultivated over many years. "Is an official Magus something like Lord Leylin?"

"Yes! Do you now understand how much trouble you have brought us?" Jenny gave Baelin an arrogant look.

“But haven’t we already saved him?” Baelin bitterly laughed. “What else can we do now then?”

All of a sudden, a burst of flames from afar roused Baelin from his thoughts.

In the dark, vast surroundings, this blaze was getting more and more obvious, almost dyeing the colour of the entire sky a fiery red.

“That is.... Our town!!!” Baelin stopped the horse, a frightened look on his face, “What happened? Why would this big fire suddenly appear?”

Jenny had a bad premonition. At this time, Baelin turned the horse without hesitation and headed towards the direction of the fire.

“Are you crazy?” Jenny cried out loud.

“Uncle Veeya and the rest are still inside, I want to save them!”

“They can’t be saved; can you calm down a little?” Jenny said with an agitated tone.

“What? How can you be like that? Have you forgotten? Aunt Veeya has treated you so well all this time!” Baelin said as he choked on a breath of air.

“This is not...”

“Sigh....”

While the two were arguing, the dark elf in the wagon suddenly coughed and woke up.

“A human!” He blurted out in the Twilight Zone’ Language.

Jenny’s heart went cold. The dark elves spoke a different language from humans, and this elf’s proficiency in their language was jarring.

In the subterranean world, knowledge was a trademark of nobility, and mastery of foreign languages was prominent amongst them.

When she was young, Jenny had been taught the languages of dark elves, gnomes, and even grey dwarves by a private tutor. Learning them despite the physiological differences was simply a nightmare! And yet, this dark

elf spoke so cleanly that it took Jenny by surprise.

“Where is this place?” the dark elf asked as he sat up and looked at the lost Baelin.

“This is the Twilight Zone. Who are you?”

“I’m Memphis, and I need to go now. I’ve given you enough trouble already; I’m really sorry!”

The dark elf named Memphis had an apologetic look on his face.

Chapter 347: Destiny

Memphis struggled and wanted to get up. But immediately, the spider made of dark aura on his chest let out a hiss. His face went pale, and he fell back down as large beads of sweat rolled down his face.

Shuffling

Baelin suddenly heard a mild, yet periodic rumble.

“It’s coming from the town! Did someone survive?” Baelin beamed with delight.

In contrast, Memphis’ face suddenly changed. “It’s the footsteps of the Underground Winter Spiders! They have caught up with us!”

A short while later, the silhouettes of five Underground Winter Spider Knights appeared before Baelin’s eyes.

“Memphis! You’re really here!”

“That’s great, we actually found you!”

“His head will definitely give us some merit!”

The knights started chuckling, talking in their language. Jenny only managed to understand a few terms, whereas Baelin had a blank face as he could not understand it at all.

Very quickly, the blank look on his face turned into one of horror.

This was because the knights were sharing the backs of the Underground Winter Spiders with groups of severed human heads, which were still dripping with blood!

He could even see a few familiar faces amongst them.

“Unc—UNCLE VEEYA! What did you do to them!?” Baelin’s veins popped out with anger, and he unsheathed the cross sword on his back.

“Haha...” Although the Underground Winter Spider Knights could not understand Baelin’s reproaching them, they could infer his fury from his body language. One of them used a spear to pick up a head and started

taunting Baelin

At the same time, another knight held a spear and rushed forward.

“Aaaaah... I’m going to kill all of you!” Baelin’s eyes were bloodshot, and he too rushed forward.

“Secret technique! Cross Star!” Baelin’s life force abruptly exploded and formed an illusory armour around his body.

“Kill!”

Cross blade and spear collided, and Baelin and the Underground Winter Spider knight both retreated a few steps.

Underground Winter Spider knights were the pinnacle of an army whose regular soldiers each matched human Grand Knights. Combining their own ability with runes and their mounts, their strength vastly surpassed that of the average Grand Knight.

However, Baelin himself was no ordinary Grand Knight and could fight him evenly.

Unfortunately, Baelin had to fight not one opponent, but five!

After seeing the life force explode out from Baelin’s body, a few knights looked at each other, shouted a few words Baelin could not understand and rushed forward.

Pew

A black ray shot through the sky and landed on the shoulders of an Underground Winter Spider Knight, piercing into the knight’s shoulder with some difficulty.

Jenny stood on the carriage, bow in hand. Her face was calm whilst she shot arrows non-stop.

Naturally, she could see the situation clearly. Under present circumstances, the only way to survive was eliminating this small party.

The problem was that they were badly outnumbered, and each of their opponents was stronger than Grand Knights; exterminating them would

not be easy.. Jenny smiled bitterly in her heart.

As was to be expected, Baelin was slowly surrounded by the knights and seemed unable to endure any more attacks. The illusory armor around him began to appear as if it would explode any moment.

Creak! Creak!

One of the Spiders, under its rider's commands, leaped past Baelin's resistance and arrived before the carriage

The black spear pierced forth, and the resulting winds caused Jenny's face to change.

"Ouch!" Nearby, Baelin let out a groan. His armor had disintegrated, and blood was gushing out from all of his wounds.

Buzz! Buzz!

Suddenly, Jenny felt a strong energy wave explode violently next to her. She turned her head and saw Memphis struggling to open a scroll in his hands.

A grey ripple swept out, the ring of light seeming to be a spirit avoiding both Jenny and Baelin as it reached the Underground Winter Spider Knights. It was like a halo that bound the knights and their mounts.

The knights that had been bound by the halo immediately felt the enormous power they were proud of dissipating. Even their mounts began trembling as if they could not stand under their own weight.

"A Weakening Imprint! Retreat!" A knight immediately shouted.

But at this time, Baelin lost all self-restraint. "Die!"

"Cross Blade!" He violently used the last bit of his spiritual energy and executed the killing stance of the cross sword technique.

A blade of light in the shape of a cross mercilessly slashed through the four surrounding knights.

Their faces became lifeless, and in a few moments, they disintegrated along with their mounts.

Whoosh Jenny seized this chance and used a single arrow to pierce through the neck of the last escaping knight.

Memphis let out a smile, but abruptly spat out black blood, after which he fainted.

Half a day later, on the carriage, Jenny looked at the defeated Baelin, and Memphis beside her, and was speechless.

“Why? Why must we kill? Why must there be war?” Baelin muttered under his breath, the world having lost all colour.

“This is an answer that I’ve been looking for, but unfortunately I have not reached a conclusion!”

Currently, Memphis was using the sap from a green plant to wrap the wounds on his chest. He laughed bitterly, “The two of you have saved me. I, Memphis, swear upon the honor of the dark royalty that I will repay the two of you!”

“Let’s not talk about that for now. The conflict you mentioned previously, is that real?” Jenny was obviously more concerned about this issue than other matters.

“It’s real! I have suffered from persecution and attempted assassination from others just because I advocated for peace!”

Memphis’ eyes glowed, and his voice sank.

“What’s our plan now?”

Jenny looked at Baelin.

“I have decided! I must do my best to prevent the war this time around. I don’t want to see more people shedding blood!”

Baelin’s voice was coarse but held an unquestionable resolve.

“You’re crazy!” Jenny was trembling: “Based on your ability alone??”

“No! There’s still him!” Baelin pointed to Memphis. “I will escort him back to the Dark Elven Empire and try my best to stop the war!”

Having made that decision, Baelin suddenly felt like he was heating up.

He ripped open his clothes, revealing a gold coin that had a peculiar exterior. On one side of the coin was a skeleton, whereas on the other side was a lucky bird; the rim of the coin gave off a dim glow. Baelin had pierced through the gold coin, run a string through it, and hung it on his neck.

Baelin caressed the gold coin, his eyes showing signs of even more determination, "Mister Leylin! Master! You support me as well, don't you?"

.....

Eastern Twilight Zone, Nature's Alliance headquarters.

Currently, Nature's Alliance had stabilised its strength as a medium-scale guild and had countless hundreds of acolytes, far from what it was like in the past.

Moreover, the increased presence of Magi strengthened their defenses greatly. They were now a few ranks higher than before.

In the forbidden area in the middle of Nature's Alliance, within a huge laboratory.

Leylin blanked out and immediately looked towards the golden crystal in his hands. Currently, the crystal was emitting a faint heat, and the golden light generated from within enshrouded it.

"A portion of the spiritual force has been received?" Leylin suddenly laughed.

"It looks like Baelin has already started walking along with his destined spiritual path! The strength of fate will accumulate in his body!"

Leylin glanced at the A.I. Chip's progress with the recovery of the meditation techniques.

Sacred Flame, the high-grade meditation technique that Leylin longed for, the same one that could predict the future, had finally been fully recovered. There were even a few areas that were being constantly improved.

On the other hand, Kemoyin's Pupil had not advanced at all in the past

three years, remaining at halfway to completion. Leylin assumed that the lack of high-grade meditation techniques meant that advancing it to the fourth grade was exceedingly difficult.

After all, the only one rank four technique in his possession could only be cultivated by Dragons, while the others had no information that could assist in the progress of Kemoyin's Pupil.

On the other hand, Sacred Flame had been recovered much earlier, and even went through a few modifications to remove the negative repercussions.

It was a pity that the A.I. Chip only managed to simulate it to the third rank. This meant the technique only went this far, and that left Leylin feeling slightly regretful

"Since the gears of fate have started to turn, then I can only continue to scatter more of these 'seeds' so as to anticipate a harvest in the future!" Leylin stroked his chin and looked towards the experiment table.

The silver-white table top had a few peculiar objects on it. Among these items were a black ring, a five-coloured pendant, and a tattered notebook.

"A.I. Chip! Begin!" Leylin's eyes shot out a blue glow, and he picked the few objects up.

[Limited AI programming has been completed, inputting data!] The A.I Chip intoned.

After a few minutes, Leylin picked up the black ring. A ray of light shot out, and out came the figure of a scholarly looking Magus.

"I am the legendary Grand Magus Merlin, you lucky fellow! You will receive my advice and become the Twilight Zone's strongest genius!"

Leylin's mouth quivered. The Grand Magus figure seemed to have life, as it spoke with charm.

These were the limited Artificial Intelligences that Leylin had been designing. He had the ability to control the programs remotely, which made them very useful.

Having been pleased with himself after the adjustments, Leylin placed the few items into an empty bag and walked out of the laboratory.

“My lord!”

Along the way, no matter whether they were official Magi or acolytes, all of them lowered their heads in respect. Some acolytes would even bow from a distance, and quickly walk away.

“I can’t believe that even I would receive such treatment!” Leylin abruptly laughed.

If high-level Magi had not intentionally exercised restraint, the strong radiation that emitted from their bodies would be a type of contagion that could even be lethal to low-level acolytes.

As a result, previously in the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy, there were many forbidden areas, which were actually the living areas and experimentation areas of high-level Magi.

In the past, when Leylin had seen those Magi, he would also bow from a distance before quickly avoiding them.

But now, it was time for others to do so instead.

Chapter 348: Dolon

In a short span of three years, Nature's Alliance had cemented its status as a medium-scale guild. After absorbing Dense Fog Forest's remains, it had even managed to become a peak medium-scale guild! All of these achievements had been largely attributed to Leylin's contributions, a fact that went undisputed.

Even if he did nothing personally, the mere presence of a rank 2 Magus would eliminate most of the Alliance's troubles.

Hence, the faith that he commanded from members of Nature's Alliance had been increasing day by day up to a point of reverence, even deification.

Additionally, a lot of Magi had joined during this period of large-scale recruitment. Although Celine's strength as a rank 1 Magus afforded her some bit of status, there was no longer any influences that she could have.

This meant that even if Leylin intended to take away her nominal position as the guild leader, he needed but to ask.

Passing through layers of glowing spell formations, Leylin ended up at a purple villa.

"My lord!" Celine and Iren respectfully bowed.

"Mmm!" Leylin nodded, and directly asked, "Has anything happened recently?"

"The guild's development has been very smooth. Currently, our influence has expanded to the vicinity of the Ural mountain plains. Two local small-scale guilds have also expressed their desire to subordinate themselves to us..." Iren took the lead and bowed while reporting to Leylin.

A peak rank 1 Magus—Leylin's strongest military force—Iren ranked highly within Nature's Alliance, where he specialised in the guild's expansion.

"What about the approaching horde of darkness creatures and the Dark Elven Empire?" Leylin asked.

“Reports of abnormal activity of the darkness creatures are starting to come in. In addition, the warmongering faction in the Dark Elven Empire successfully staged a coup, eliminating all influence of the pro-peace faction. They’ve mobilised the entire army, and are ready to attack any day now.”

Wars were not uncommon in the subterranean world, but they rarely coincided with the attacks of the horde of darkness creatures. This was so rare, in fact, that even a peak rank 1 Magus like Iren had only encountered such a situation once in his lifetime.

That period had seen the loss of many Magi and numerous large-scale guilds. It had come to be known as the subterranean world’s Great Power Reshuffle

An event that destabilised the world of Magi would obviously be a long period of suffering for the commoners.

“From the looks of it, a big war is inevitable!” Leylin sighed lightly.

A war between two intelligent species wouldn’t be quick to occur. It would be prefaced by a long period of strategy and preparation, with very little surprise attacks occurring. High ranking Magi had started keeping tabs on their opponents as early as three years ago, and their preparations had begun even further back.

However, precisely because of this long preparatory phase, any and all strategies tended to be useless; the war would devolve into a contest of information gathering and military might.

“Have we made any moves yet?” Leylin looked at Celine.

Recently, this woman had become much more beautiful. It was as if the power she’d gained made her glow more than she already did.

Power was an elixir to men. This was no less true for women as well. It was a pity that although these women were as beautiful as roses, every rose has its thorns. To conquer them was not a simple task.

Were he on Earth, Leylin would naturally not think like this. But the Magus world was different. Dominance, status—everything came from his

own power, and he was not in the least bit concerned that Celine would one day surpass him.

“Forget the commoners’ war for now. The joint conference has commissioned a war council headed by the nine enforcers. It issued a formal request for your assistance!”

Celine arranged her hair. This revealed a translucent earring inlaid with a glowing red ruby.

The request was a result of Leylin’s agreement with Logan. In exchange for his participation in the war, Nature’s Alliance had been allowed to expand unchecked.

“Where have they stationed me?” Leylin asked with interest as he sat on a reclining chair. He raised up a crystal goblet, the fresh red wine within as thick as blood.”

“Dolon City! A large number of the Magi who responded to the call have gathered there! Of course, Duke Fendix and the royal military have been stationed there as well!”

“Dolon!” Leylin raised his glass, and a map of eastern Twilight Zone appeared within his mind.

“They’ve retreated too far! That’s basically giving up the borderlands!”

“Most of the commoners have already been evacuated!” Celine smiled wryly, “But for some areas, it’s beyond our control.”

As a Magus, Celine generally thought of problems purely based on how they affected her, but now that this matter concerned everyone, she exhibited the sympathetic nature of a woman.

Immediately, the sympathy turned into worry.

“The war council intends to use Dolon, Wakeshire, and Sadoor to form a tripartite defence that makes full use of our geographical advantages. When the war begins, my lord, you will have to face the military might of the Dark Elven Empire, including many of their matriarchs.”

The Dark Elven Empire was still a matriarchal society and was more a

united kingdom made of numerous smaller clans than anything else.

The matriarchs of the smaller clans were at least as strong as official Magi. The ones Celine referred to were the matriarchs of the larger clans, existences that rivalled rank 2 Magi in might. Dark elves were naturally gifted with extraordinary strength, something which made the average elf much more powerful than the average human. Were it not for their low fertility, they would have conquered the Twilight Zone long ago.

Celine's face was full of worry. After all, she was very clear that the powers she had came from Leylin. Should anything befall him, even if Nature's Alliance didn't crumble, it would fall dramatically in power.

"Don't worry, I have confidence!" Leylin let out a smile. That he had decided to go forward meant he was amply prepared for anything that he might come across. At the very least, his personal safety wasn't an issue. After all, even in a war as large in scale as this one, rank 2 Magi rarely fell.

Furthermore, he was not there to fight but to observe. The moment something was amiss, he would flee. Which Matriarch would dare sacrifice herself to prevent his escape?

Leylin had already recovered his strength as a rank 2 Warlock, even advancing in some areas. He was confident that, as long as he didn't meet an old freak that rivalled rank 3 Magi, nothing could stop him.

However, thinking up to this point, Leylin felt a bit depressed.

In a world of beings with extraordinary abilities, large-scale wars generally depended on the strength of the higher-ups. Wouldn't the humans turtling up mean that even his monstrous strength would not be able to turn the tide of this war?

Neither Celine nor Iren was qualified to know of this. Perhaps only rank 2 Magi would be able to see the situation more clearly.

"No matter what, I need to go and have a look. If I were to pass the completed techniques to the acolytes of Nature's Alliance, it would arouse suspicion. Furthermore, the shifting landscape of war could hold good opportunities for me..." Leylin considered.

Upon seeing Leylin deep in thought, Iren immediately took his leave. Celine was a little disappointed and just curtsied.

Just as she turned to leave, Leylin grinned. “Celine, don’t go just yet...”

Having heard that, Celine’s face revealed a charming smile.

Dolon City was a military town along the Eastern Twilight Zone’s border. The town was built purely of black granite, which made it look like a huge fort from afar.

Currently, militia lined the entrance of the town, and soldiers and fleets of carriages crossed the gates occasionally.

Flags bearing the royal family’s crest were everywhere, and the silhouettes of knights leading small patrol teams were scattered around.

The entrance was guarded by official Magi in grey robes, and stringent checks were performed on everyone.

Dolon City originally supported 100,000 residents. Most of its current population, however, comprised of soldiers.

Now that the joint conference had commissioned a war council, the royals they backed could only execute their battle plans. All of Dolon City was preparing for war, and had begun wartime operations.

The center of the city was occupied by the grandest villa in town. However, this villa was not for royalty; it was meant, instead, for distinguished Magi.

Numerous Magi, robed in all colours, could be seen on premises. They’d even set up a large spell formation for defence. Some of the Magi patrolling the city walls would occasionally cast spells on the wall to strengthen it.

“The atmosphere here is so stifling!” A rank 3 acolyte wearing a grey acolyte robe walked along a deserted road, and intermittently glanced at both sides of the street. Passing soldiers would bow to this mighty magician.

“With one foot already in the grave, how can I still be considered a

magician?” Aaron smiled wryly.

This acolyte was among the first group of people Leylin had met when he was transported here.

Back then, Aaron was among the party of three acolytes and two grand Knights that Leylin had saved in the Woody Wastelands. As recompense, Leylin had scanned their souls, which resulted in them losing a lot of things.

Aaron sighed deeply.

During his previous reckless foray into the Woody Wastelands, he had luckily obtained bio-materials worth a lot of magic crystals. Still, he felt like something was amiss, although he could not put a finger on it.

What terrified him further was that, after his return, he found out that his aptitude had dropped a grade!

Aaron and the other acolytes had been lucky to survive Leylin’s reckless scanning of their soul. However, his random tampering of their memories had grave consequences.

The development of magicians depended largely on their aptitude. Aaron’s original aptitude was not astounding, a mere grade 3. When it fell to grade 2, he felt as if the world began to crumble down on him.

He still remembered the regret and disappointment in his mentor’s eyes after the examination, as he said, “Perhaps an abnormal being attacked you leading to the demotion of your aptitude. It might never be reversed. Pity! What a pity!”

Chapter 349: Anya

With the drop in his aptitude, he turned from an acolyte with a bit of hope into a good-for-nothing.

After seeing Aaron's state, his mentor did not beat around the bush, telling him directly that he no longer had the qualifications to train in a high-grade meditation technique.

Some high-grade meditation techniques had stringent requirements for those cultivating them, and currently, Aaron did not qualify to cultivate his.

"It's much more difficult to advance to an official Magus using the simplified version of the high-grade meditation technique. Doesn't this amount to completely giving up on me? And then there's her..." Aaron lowered his head, fingernails digging into flesh.

After finding out that his aptitude had lowered and that he could not train in the high-grade meditation technique anymore, his relatives and former friends had shunned him. Even his fiancée had abandoned him!

The memory of her firmly leaning into another's embrace as she looked at Aaron in disdain left him feeling like his chest would burst into flames.

What infuriated him further, even driving him into the pits of despair, was that his enemies in the guild had taken the opportunity to beat him up. There were even traces of evidence showing that woman pulling strings in the background, for him to be dispatched to a place like this.

Dolon City was at the frontlines of the war. Official Magi might be able to retreat calmly if the city fell, but level 3 acolytes like him had no chance!

In wartime, the army would be much more willing to give up on cannon fodder like him than on those of higher rank. Historically, an intense war like this would spell doom for over half the acolytes!

Aaron found himself feeling numb. He had to drag his body to the city gate. "Level 3 acolyte Aaron, reporting for duty!" he said, trying his best to

look more alert.

“En!” The Magus at his post nodded, neither finding anything strange nor getting mad.

He’d seen numerous acolytes who were dumped here. With no backing, this fellow wouldn’t live past a month, so why would he grow angry at a walking corpse?

“Your mission is to maintain this detection spell formation. I’ve already adjusted it. White dots are regular people, while red dots are acolytes and knights. The purple dots are official Magi. Is that understood?”

“Yes!” Aaron nodded.

Suddenly, the spell formation rumbled and produced a loud bang, cracking apart at the edges. A black ray of light exploded forth.

“And what does black mean?” Aaron asked, dumbfounded.

“Rank 2! A powerful existence that is at rank 2 or above that!” The Magus answered in a daze, and then snapped out of it. “Quick! Sound the alarm!”

Not far away, a black dot expanded in the sky, gradually forming a human figure.

Watching the city gates where there was an uproar, Leylin shook his head slightly. “Looks like there’s been a misunderstanding!”

He ceased advancing and silently waited.

Minutes later, two streaks of similarly powerful energy undulations burst out from Dolon City, and two figures transformed into rays of light, darting in front of Leylin.

These were two rank 2 Magi, one male, and one female. The man, in red robes with silver patterns embroidered on, laughed heartily as he greeted, “Sir Leylin! It’s great that you were able to get here in time!”

The female Magus merely stood aside and smiled, seemingly leaving the situation to her counterpart.

“It’s my honour to meet you, Sir Fendix!” Leylin bowed while smiling gently.

In these three years, it was not as if Leylin had done nothing. At least, he had gotten familiar with a few rank 2 Magi in the east.

This rank 2 Magus was a leader of a large-scale guild. Duke Fendix was one of his descendants.

“Come! If there’s anything else, let’s talk about it after we get back!” Fendix looked at the uproar around them and laughed towards Leylin, then slowly descended.

Leylin and the female Magus followed behind him.

“It’s a rank 2 lord! Quick, bow!”

Leave alone ordinary soldiers, even high-ranking military officers and nobles knelt in front of him, while the official Magus from before respectfully bowed to his waist.

Aaron quickly bowed as well, and then raised his head, confused. He secretly glanced at the young person in the middle, “I seem to have seen that lord before somewhere, but I don’t remember where...”

Just as Aaron’s gaze swept over him, the Magus seemed to sense it and a pair of black pupils flitted over.

All of a sudden, a surge of darkness and shadows surrounded Aaron, causing him to retreat a few steps, feeling suffocated.

Aaron was so afraid he broke out into a cold sweat and quickly lowered his head, not daring to raise it.

“It’s actually him! I didn’t expect us to meet here!” In contrast, a grin appeared on Leylin’s face.

Strictly speaking, all that he knew about Twilight Zone had originated from this acolyte’s memories. To be able to meet again, he was considered quite lucky.

“I’ll choose you first then!” The notion of a twisted delight seemed to rise in Leylin.

This thought flashed past, but Leylin's expression remained unchanged as he descended to the mansion at the centre with the other two rank 2 Magi.

The interior decoration was not bad, and it looked to be the residence of some nobility or even mayor of the city. Of course, it had now been taken over.

The three Magi entered the hall and took a seat, a few acolytes bringing drinks and some fruits, and then carefully making their way out.

"The main forces of the dark elves have reached the border. They seem to be very determined this time and have even dispatched the matriarchs of several ancient families. Looks like we'll be under immense pressure this time..."

Fendix looked grim but smiled at Leylin, "Of course, with Sir Leylin here, we'll have even more hope!"

"As a human, I naturally can't shirk my responsibilities!" While Leylin said this solemnly on the surface, he was meanwhile thinking about retreating the moment the situation wasn't in his favour.

Though he didn't mind helping human beings occupy more land for the sake of survival, this was only if this would not harm his own interests. If not, there was nothing to consider.

Of course, this was also how many other high ranked Magi thought.

Even if the war council was aware of this fact, there was little they could do.

Meanwhile, Fendix was still speaking, "Battles between humans, as well as the regular dark elves and beast waves are usually handed to the duke to settle. Underground Winter Spider Knights and dark elf Magi, as well as powerful darkness creatures will require Magi to act, and there is but one reason for our existence, which is to prevent the matriarchs of the dark elves and the emperor of the darkness creatures from meddling!"

Leylin nodded. The powers of rank 2 Magi were good at suppression and deterrence. After all, if a rank 2 existence let go of all their inhibitions,

even the Dark Elven Empire would not be unharmed.

“By the way, why is the Dark Elven Empire so confident this time?” Leylin’s eyes flashed and he asked.

Hearing this, Fendix and the female Magus exchanged glances and smiled wryly, “This is supposed to be top secret, but Leylin, you’re a rank 2 Magus as well. You’ve also joined up with us, so there’s nothing left to hesitate about.”

Fendix set up a sound-proof boundary, “The protector of the entirety of our Twilight Zone, the person who has become a rank 3 Magus, does not have much time left...”

“The limit of the lifespan of a rank 3 Magus is a thousand years! Only Morning Star Magi can break through this limit. Ever since he started protecting this region, it has been over nine hundred years...”

Leylin went silent for a while. Then, he asked, “In other words, this war is but a probe?”

“The dark elves must have received some information from their end and started probing, but now...” Fendix forced a smile, “All I can say is that Twilight Zone is not allowed to fall back.”

Leylin’s heart fell. It looked like this rank 3 Magus was not in a good condition.

Under these circumstances, the dark elves’ probing would likely become an invasion on a large scale, perhaps even threatening the existence of humans!

Something flashed in his mind, and he suddenly thought of Baelin.

“Chaos and suffering will give birth to the child of destiny. Looks like this is the overture to troubled times.”

With Leylin’s silence, the hall was filled with a tense atmosphere.

“Alright, let’s not talk about these. Shall we prepare a grand welcoming banquet? We could use this opportunity and let those Magi meet you!” Seeing that the atmosphere seemed to have frozen, the rank 2 female

Magus smiled slightly and suggested.

“No, there’s no need! Let me rest for a while and then prepare a few rank 2 spells!”

Leylin did not have the slightest interest in these customs.

“That’s fine!” Magi were generally antisocial, and this was even more so for higher ranked Magi. Fendix and the others did not take it to heart.

.....

Central Twilight Zone!

This was the core of Twilight Zone, and where there was the largest population. Caravans passed by the routes frequently and were bustling with life.

In an unknown area deep in the earth’s crust, a green ray of light illuminated a room.

Bathed in the green light was a withered old man. His body was covered with wrinkles and his eyes had sunk so deep into his skull that he seemed like a dead man walking.

A large bizarre flower had tendrils wrapped around his back. Its densely packed sizeable leaves and branches were a dark green that made them seem fat and juicy, and many of its feelers hung low, extending deep underground to an unknown destination. The stolon penetrated the man’s flesh as if taking root there, the man’s eyes shining as the roots swelled, channeling a great amount of plant matter into him.

A black ray shot out from the back of the old man’s hand, projecting a totem in the form of a large spider.

“My old friend, I can sense your feebleness. The aura of life is constantly waning from your body, and you can’t even reject my ‘Life Absorption’ much longer...”

This was the voice of a young lady. It was pleasant to listen to, and even a little bewitching.

“Anya! The ruler of the Dark Elven Empire, the most respected

matriarch of the ancient clan!" The old man slowly called out this woman's identity, and immediately after, an absolute formidable energy undulation exploded from behind the old man.

"You can't stop me..." The woman in the totem imprint sighed.

Chapter 350: Serendipity

Snap!

Space seemed to freeze for a moment, but then it seemed like nothing had happened.

The black spider totems began to dissipate slowly, and Anya's voice sounded out, "You've grown old already"

Bang! The black imprints dissolved into light. There were fewer stalks on his back now, and milky white sap flowed out of his injuries.

When the old man raised his head once again, he seemed older; patches of grey had begun to appear on his skin.

"Has this body's vitality been taxed to its limit?" The old man looked at the spots on his body, and couldn't help but laugh bitterly his eyes dull and lifeless.

"Time..." the old man said with a long sigh that instantly swept away the rays of light. The cave turned dark once more.

.....

Aaron had returned to his room.

The last rays of twilight revealed a mix of rotting wooden boards and moldy corners. This stinky room was the 'luxury' he was awarded sole residence in. This dilapidated room showed how much he was valued.

Yet, at this time, he could not bring himself to care about it. His mind was occupied with his earlier encounter.

Patrol. Detection spell formation. The youth with black eyes... Memories flitted across his mind.

'I've definitely seen him before! But why can't I remember where?' he was trying hard to recall. Suddenly, he covered his face and started screaming, veins popping out at his temples. The pain caused him to black out. His screams permeated the room until he returned to his senses a few moments later, finding himself on the ground.

Hot sweat rolled down Aaron's face as he gasped.

"Again and again! This disease from my adventure in the wastelands is wasting away my spiritual force..."

Bang!

At that moment, as if unable to withstand his frustration, a piece of the floor rose up. A black gleam immediately caught Aaron's attention.

"What... is this?" Curiosity piqued, he dug out the black object and placed it on his palm. It was a ring with ancient writings on it, one whose surface was coated in black. Aaron's heart skipped a beat.

"A ring?" He twisted it around, "It's still giving off faint energy waves, is it a magic artifact?"

Magical artifacts, regardless of size and grade, will save your life on the battlefield. As his thoughts turned towards that direction, Aaron couldn't help breathing heavily.

All of a sudden, he felt a surging pain from his hand, a prick which caused him to shout and almost throw the ring to the ground.

"What's this?" Aaron looked at his forefinger, stunned, as blood dripped onto the ring from the punctured skin. A small thorn could be seen on the edge of the black ring, which was what had hurt him just now.

Xiu! The blood drop was immediately absorbed like water on a sponge. The black ring flashed before turning grey. Simultaneously, the energy waves it was previously giving off vanished and the ring seemed to lose all power, now just an ordinary object.

"This... is it the 'Binding Ceremony?' in myths" Aaron scratched his head with uncertainty.

Although Aaron did not know much about magic artifacts, he was aware that some high-grade magic artifacts that were extremely rare required a ceremony to bind them to oneself. And the catalyst to begin these ceremonies... was blood!

"Hahaha! Kid, you're right!" At this moment, a voice sounded in Aaron's

head.

“Who is it? Who’s there?” The sudden voice bewildered Aaron and he began to look around. He could see no one..

“I’m in the palm of your hand!” replied an aged voice.

“You are... the ring?” Aaron’s eyes suddenly widened.

“Mm! Kid, how about we make a deal?” the old man laughed heartily.

“No! I will not make any deals with you, nor will I sell my soul to you!” Aaron said firmly.

Magi were not reclusive people. Aaron had heard stories about ancient beings and exotic creatures that made deals with humans, toying with them and harvesting their spirits.

“Really? You don’t want to restore your aptitude anymore?” The old man’s laugh was sinister.

“Re... Restore my aptitude?” Aaron’s heartbeat quickened.

“I’ve grasped the mysteries of the soul. If your aptitude had been this low originally, it would have been difficult to increase it. But it’s still possible to reverse the effects of the damage to your soul...” the old man explained.

“Who are you exactly? Why would you help me?” Aaron asked, reigning his emotions in.

“I am the ancient legendary Magus, Merlin..... ‘s memory fragment!” the old man paused, causing Aaron to slip.

“Memory fragment?”

“Yes. My physical body has long since decayed, but this fragment has remained here, stuck in this ring...” The old man seemed to be reminiscing.

“As for why I’m helping you, I told you before. I want something in return!”

“What do you want?” Although Aaron was desperate for a cure to his

problem, he was still alert and vigilant.

“Don’t worry, you’re someone destined for death. How much can I really ask of you? I’m not a devil that is here to collect your soul!”

Merlin chuckled, “I need you to gather my remaining fragments! And in return, not only will I cure your disease, I’ll even pass on a complete high-grade meditation technique to you and help you advance to become an official Magus...”

.....

“High-grade meditation technique, an official Magus!” Aaron was delighted, but this was immediately followed by piercing agony. Originally, he had hopes of achieving all these, but now...

“Your remaining fragments? What do you mean?”

“I’d originally made many magic equipments into which I’d placed fragments of my spirit. I’d been expecting big misfortune, and prepared them to tide it over. You need to help me find the remaining fragments of my spirit...”

“Every artifact you find will be of great help to us!” Merlin reassured Aaron upon noticing his hesitation. “Besides, the current you is too weak to help me, so I’ll also help you increase your strength as much as possible!”

“What are you trying to do? Do you intend to resurrect yourself?” Aaron guessed.

“Hehe... The rules of Death aren’t something a trifling Magus like me can interfere with. I’m only a remnant filled with unfulfilled desires, and I’m unwilling to remain cooped up in a ring forever. I need your help to find my remaining fragments. Do this one thing for me, and we will be even. I swear on my own spirit!”

“You don’t need to swear, I will help you!” Aaron fiercely said.

“You’re right! What have you to gain from fooling a dead man like me? For that woman to abandon me for her own pleasure, I will not stand for

it!" Aaron said with red eyes.

"Haha! Alright, even if I'm a mere fragment, I still possess a huge amount of knowledge. All you need is that to become Twilight Zone's premier genius! Then, you can easily rise above the others once again!" Magus Merlin laughed heartily in Aaron's head.

"Then, let's summon the Trial's Eye and sign a contract?" The fury on Aaron's face disappeared, and he calmly stated this condition.

"Of course!" the old man said after a brief period of silence.

Aaron's eyes flashed and he immediately summoned the Trial's Eye hologram as a witness.

"Under the witness of the Trial's Eye...."

In the room, the voices of two people swearing an oath could be heard.

.....

"It's done!"

On the other side, Leylin who was in the laboratory laughed, looked at his own body bound by Trial's Eye and held a pitcher with the solution of a Nefarious Filthbird's feathers.

That thing was sent on purpose by the ring.

Merlin was just a limited AI, but it could fool the inexperienced Aaron. Furthermore, at critical moments, Leylin could control him from afar.

All in all, this was just a counterfeit of a certain ring and grandfather.

"With what I've given you, how will you affect the wind and waves of Twilight Zone? I'm looking forward to it!" Leylin chuckled, and an intense light flashed in his eyes.

.....

As a nervous atmosphere permeated Dolon City, all the commoners were evacuated. Within days, many darkness creatures surrounded it, and among them could be seen the faint silhouettes of people.

"Sir Leylin! Sir Fendix has invited you to the City Wall!" A middle aged

man wearing golden armor respectfully informed Leylin.

This middle aged man was Duke Fendix, the commander of the army. The Fendix Family had consecrated numerous official Magi, many of whom were famous. Furthermore, this included two of Fendix's own descendants.

But in front of Leylin, they were required to lower their heads like a commoner in the presence of a noble.

"Got it!" Leylin said as he slowly closed the big book in his hand and arrived at the City Wall.

Because this was the first attack, not only were there numerous soldiers and generals, but Magi were also present to watch.

"Sir Leylin!" Fendix greeted Leylin, floating in mid-air.

Leylin laughed as he flew up to join him. The two looked at a black line at the difference that was rushing at them like a tide.

"Magnificent, is it not?" The beginning stages of the war would be fought by cannon fodder. These creatures did not possess much strength, and Fendix's expression did not even change.

"Magnificent indeed!" Leylin could not help but say lightly as he looked beyond the wall. There were hundreds of thousands of darkness creatures down below.

He had not expected so many darkness creatures to be here. And this number was only that of those in the area. The total number of darkness creatures in all the armies was definitely astronomical.

"Darkness creatures, human beings, and the other species; this land cannot support all of us. Thus, every once in a while, all these races go to war...." a female rank 2 Magus said softly at the side.

"Among all the races, war and alliance both have occurred countless times since long ago....."

"This war will have no winners and losers. Only after all groups have used up nearly all their resources, supplies and soldiers, only then, can the

war end.....”

Chapter 351: Bestowal

Upon hearing that, Leylin turned silent.

History showed that, when both sides in a war had equal military strength at all levels, this was indeed the largest possibility.

With the lifespan of the protector of Twilight Zone being at an end, they were actually at a disadvantage. Although the entire race wouldn't be exterminated, the humans would lose large amounts of their territory.

"Our strategy this time is to rely on using the three cities to defend. Every city has three rank 2 Magi stationed there, as well as a large army. The protector of the east is on standby, ready to reinforce any of the cities as required!"

Leylin stroked his chin. "The bloodbath here will truly be terrifying...."

"Hoo.. Hoo...."

As if tired of waiting, many darkness creatures started an uproar as they charged towards the city's walls.

Ten thousand horses charged on the field, causing the ground to tremble a little.

Fendix's face remained unchanged and he used a secret imprint to pass a message. "Engage the first layer of defense!"

Instantly, many runes appeared on the massive city walls of Dolon, radiating light that shaped itself into a barrier.

Boom!

Flames! Tongues of flame shot out, swallowing the darkness creatures nearby. They gradually grew larger, slowly spreading out further.

"Isn't it a little early to be using fire elemental formations?" Leylin cringed his brows.

"These darkness creatures may not be strong, but there are too many of them. We cannot let them exhaust our strength in numbers with just the first exchange. In addition, we need our troops to have high morale. We

still have a lot of magic crystals in reserve and these outermost formations don't consume as many. There's no need to worry!" Fendix gazed at the battlefield and explained to Leylin casually.

Raging flames burned like a giant torch in the middle of the night, attracting innumerable Dark Moths to them.

Aaron stood at the top of the city, his face pale at the sight before him. The burning corpses had a pungent odour which sent shivers down his spine.

After waiting for the fire to burn out, the darkness creatures charged to the base of the walls and were about to enter battle with the city guard.

Out of the corner of his eye, Aaron noticed a ferocious beast with sharp claws and fierce, pearly white teeth drooling. Immediately, he looked at the grey ring on the forefinger of his right hand and shouted out within his mind: "Grandpa Merlin! If you don't help me now, I'm definitely dead meat!"

"Fret not. With me here, nothing will happen to you!" Merlin's voice sounded inside Aaron's head. This was not Leylin talking to him, but the limited AI.

"Originally, you could simply have defected and run away, but it's a pity that we are now in the middle of war! If you try to escape, all the magicians in Twilight Zone will be left with no choice but to immediately hunt you down!" Merlin seemed to sigh.

If this was during times of peace and Aaron had defected and escaped, naturally only the members of his own guild would be hunting him down. But all that changed during war,

"Of course I know this!" Aaron panicked.

"Move three steps backwards! Use the Secondary Energy Fireball Technique! Aim 50 degrees to the right!" Merlin commanded with a cold and stern tone.

Aaron's body could not help but obey the voice, and he moved three steps backwards, avoiding the claws of a beast.

“Quack! Quack!”

A huge black crow spiraled downwards and upon seeing Aaron’s escape, an almost human glint of regret flashed in its eyes.

“Dammit! I. Want. To. Kill. You!” Aaron said quickly as he paused at each syllable and swung his right hand at the bird.

A small fireball cut through the air and struck the crow.

Boom! A scarlet red flame burned the crow to cinders within moments. The creature did not even get to make a sound before it was burnt to a crisp.

“Just now, that was.....” Aaron’s eyes lost focus.

He was certain that his fireball had been aimed nowhere close to the crow. Still, it seemed to have foolishly flown into its path.

“Foresight! This is something you must learn quickly if you don’t wish to die on the battlefield!” Merlin said from within the ring.

And Aaron looked at the admiration in the eyes of the acolytes surrounding him, and clenched his fist tightly in the dark: “I will....”

.....

A few hours later, the sound of a desolate beast’s howl travelled from afar, and like the tide, all the darkness creatures retreated. Fendix nodded his head: “It seems like today was just a probe. Let us head back!”

At this moment, several dark elf knights on their Underground Winter Spiders stood on the mud slope before the horde. Gazing at the scene, one of them nodded.

“The enemies’ three rank 2 matriarchs are gathered here; this is where the battle shall occur. Send the signal!”

One of the knights said a few words to a white carrier pigeon and released the bird immediately after.

The white carrier pigeon circled in the air and flew away into the horizon.

.....

Night had fallen, and military curfew had made the entirety of Dolon quiet. Back in that small, moldy room, Merlin was talking to Aaron with assurance.

“You have already been sent here. No matter what reason you have, escaping your duties is a one-way street to death. There is only one thing you can do now, and that is serve! Accumulate a lot of contribution points, and use them to speed up your advance to a rank 1 Magus! Magi all have the power to make their own decisions, which will greatly increase your chances of survival.....”

Although the entire battlefield was full of danger, there was still some hope.

At least for the magicians, the war council had set up a reward system. This allowed one to exchange contribution points for resources.

It is difficult for one to rise to power in periods of peace. War, however, produced countless heroes. It was a time when high risk met high reward.

“Of course, I know this!” Aaron thought deeply: “But my aptitude and meditation technique....” He hesitated.

“I’m working to fix your aptitude. After yesterday’s minor operation, you felt it too, didn’t you?” Merlin chuckled. The only thing manipulating him now was Leylin, who was free at the moment.

It was Leylin himself who had harmed Aaron’s aptitude in the past. Now, with the A.I. Chip and the information he had obtained from his time in Nature’s Alliance, this sort of minor injury was easy to heal.

Hearing this, Aaron’s expression relaxed. Ever since Merlin had conducted an operation on him, the pain from his injuries had alleviated, and his aptitude had been restored.

“However, just this is not enough!” Merlin continued explaining, “Your aptitude is only in the third grade, and this is your limit. Magi who can increase your aptitude have long since gone extinct. Although with your current rank you can force yourself to practice your guild’s high-grade

meditation technique, it doesn't really suit you....”

Aaron's face sank. The high-level meditation technique passed down in this Guild was Blazing Heart, and it didn't have many requirements. As long as one had affinity for the fire element and possessed an aptitude that was at or above the third rank, they could practice it.

But there was a problem here. His primary affinity was not fire, but water. Fire was only a secondary affinity of his. Furthermore, for a magician to practice Blazing Heart, the higher the aptitude the better. His third rank aptitude just barely met the standards.

“Basically, you have no way of getting recognition and learning the high-level meditation technique from your guild!” Merlin concluded.

“Yeah! So what now?” Aaron's eyes were tinted by dejection.

“Hahaha...” At this time, Merlin laughed out loud and said: “Have you forgotten? I, Merlin, am a legendary Magus. How would I not have high-grade meditation techniques of my own?”

“I will bestow upon you a complete high-grade meditation technique. Furthermore, it has the frightening ability of allowing you to peer into the future! If you can predict the future, you can control everything!” Merlin's voice was full of confidence.

“Foresee the future, control the future!” Aaron's breathing grew heavier.

“That's right! This meditation technique is called—Sacred Flame!”

.....

In Dolon City, Leylin's bedroom was vastly different from Aaron's.

The gold-plated floor, the soft, silk brocade quilt, huge crystal chandeliers and gold and silver plates holding many fruits... comparing Aaron's room to this place was like comparing a beggar's shack to a grand palace.

“Few acolytes can resist the temptation of a high-grade meditation technique...” Leylin sighed. With his connection, he could tell that Aaron had begun using this new technique, and he let out a soft gasp.

Although the A.I. chip had repaired Sacred Flame and eliminated its side-effects, Leylin was still cautious of it. The soul was a huge mystery. While Leylin had previously assumed that his research into spirits was profound, after being at the mercy of a ghost, he had realized how ridiculous his thoughts were.

The amount of research he had done in the field of spirits was negligible. He had realized he was like a frog in a well, and completely abandoned any previous notions he had about the depth of his research.

Even more so, regarding the high-grade meditation technique Sacred Flame, he wished only to admire and respect it from afar. Although he thirsted for the power of destiny, he did not want to devolve into a schizophrenic madman.

Thus, it was necessary to collect data through live tests, which was what he had put into motion.

Leylin had a blank expression on his face, full of indifference. His gaze pierced through a veil of light and stared into the future.

.....

The next day, the darkness creatures besieged the city as usual with their cannon fodder.

Boom! A fireball was shot and turned a huge black bear into a torch.

Aaron calmly retracted his hand. Uncaring of the increasingly reverent looks of the acolytes around him, he walked to the side and began meditating to restore his spiritual force.

“How does the new meditation technique feel?” Merlin and Aaron were conversing inside his head.

Aaron had previously only practiced in a simplified meditation technique. Even Leylin felt unfathomable that the transition was this smooth.

And after practicing the Sacred Flame, Aaron’s aura had faintly changed.

Chapter 352: Ten Years In A Flash

“I feel great! Be it restoring my spiritual force or during cultivation, high-grade meditation techniques are leagues beyond the simplified versions,” Aaron told Merlin as he stood up.

“But what about the aura that I’m giving off? If any of the guild members find me, I’ll definitely be caught and interrogated...”

“Haha... Don’t worry. This magic ring that I’ve smelted can conceal your aura and create artificial fluctuations in your spiritual force. With your current strength, even an official Magus won’t be able to discover you!” Merlin was very confident.

“Really?” Aaron’s eyes brightened.

“Of course, don’t you know who I am? Furthermore, this is a magical artifact! A magical artifact! Do you know what that means? You’re far too weak right now, or else you’d be able to display more of its power...”

“Not really, but I’ve heard about them before.”

Aaron scratched his head. “What do I do next?”

“Keep killing our enemies and accumulate merit points! I took a look at the reward list yesterday, and the potion there that can suppress your spiritual force will be of use. You absolutely must get that!”

“I understand!” Aaron clenched his fist tightly, eyes showing his resolution. “That lowly woman and the Botelli Family, I’ll be back!”

.....

Two months passed by.

Outside the walls of Dolon, the war raged on. Numerous armies of dark elves had stationed themselves across from the city, their camps stretching out along tens of miles. Several golden tents stood at the center of their army camp, the aura within enough to cause even Leylin to furrow his brows.

Under organized command, the battle power of the darkness creatures

and elves had risen by several levels. Dolon City was embroiled in intense battle, with the weakest rung suffering the most casualty.

However, there was a steady supply of cannon fodder from the eastern region which allowed them to hold on.

Under such high pressure, the atmosphere in Dolon City grew increasingly heavy. A sense of an impending crisis enveloped everyone's hearts.

Aaron was now a little famous, the limelight finding him after he beat up a few acolytes who had been sent to make trouble for him.

Given that Magi valued strength more than anything else, his residence had now been shifted. This one was bright, clean, and much larger than before.

Aaron was currently sitting on a blue striped bedsheet with beads of sweat rolling down his face. Leylin, in the meantime, was monitoring his actions from within the black ring.

This was the first time he was using the unique spiritual force born from his new meditation technique, Sacred Flame, to explore the tides of destiny.

Leylin paid close attention to this and ordered the A.I. Chip to periodically collect data and accumulate information in his database.

The Sacred Flame Aaron trained in was obviously not the one which the A.I. Chip had perfected. This version had been modified by Leylin using the chip, and many manipulative portions had been added in.

"It's here!" Leylin laughed, and black undulations filled his eyes.

Immediately after, the visions were intercepted by the ring.

Above the city, Aaron rose his arms and shot out a fireball, causing a huge wild boar to roll down, while a grin appeared on his face.

But at this moment, an anomaly occurred. A large black monkey jumped out of the retreating horde. It had three eyes, and the centre one shot out a red beam. The monkey itself exploded forth with a power that equalled an

official Magus!

Without any time to dodge, Aaron was blasted into smithereens!

Such scenes flashed across Leylin's eyes but were rather blurry and unordered.

"So that's how it is! At this rate, Aaron will die in the siege three days later?" Leylin touched his chin.

[Information from the meditation technique has been intercepted! Allow transmission?] The A.I. Chip's robotic voice intoned.

"Yes!" The moment Leylin spoke, Aaron's body trembled on the bed, his two eyes losing focus and rolling back as if he had seen something terrifying.

Leylin's had implemented backdoor changes to the Sacred Flame. By coupling these changes with the limited AI in the ring, any premonitions Aaron had would be intercepted and first seen by Leylin. Only with his approval would these scenes from the future enter Aaron's mind.

Besides interception, Leylin could modify these bits of vision at will. In other words, Aaron only saw what Leylin had wanted him to see.

After all, it was better to be cautious towards acolytes whose training in this allowed them to see the future. If not, what was he to do if they got a hold of his plans through their prophecies?

Of course, Aaron did not have a strong cultivation in this technique yet. He was only capable of prophesying events at the ability of a level 1 acolyte, which kept him from being able to sense anything about Leylin.

Even if he advanced to become an official Magus, with Leylin intercepting first, he would not sense anything.

To become cognizant of the interception, he needed to, at the very least, equal Leylin in power. This meant he could not predict Leylin's actions and prepare against them until he was promoted to a rank 2 Magus! Unfortunately, Leylin would not give him the opportunity to do so.

"Although the A.I. Chip could not upgrade Sacred Flame past rank 3, at

least it's no longer restricted to only females." Leylin touched his chin.

"There aren't enough guinea pigs yet!" He turned around and glanced at the colourful necklace and incomplete notebook on the table.

These were at most special magical objects. He only called them magic artifacts to fool acolytes like Aaron.

But it was enough.

"On the battlefield, one cannot control their own life nor death. If I put out this bait, they'll have to bite no matter how suspicious they are.!" Leylin beamed confidently.

As for why he had not bought slaves or chosen people from Nature's Alliance? It would be too obvious that he was the mastermind, which was not conducive to Leylin's plans.

Meanwhile, Aaron was scared stupid by the prediction.

"Hah... I'll die three days later, at the hands of a darkness creature with the strength of an official Magus," he huffed roughly. He had visibly paled and was trembling in the aftermath of that premonition.

"What are you afraid of? This is just a possibility in the river of destiny. I've already predicted my death tens of times, but haven't I gotten through alive and well?" Merlin appeared, looking disdainful.

"Yes, yes!" The light in Aaron's eyes brightened. He now knew the many benefits of being able to make use of the power of destiny.

"What should we do now?" Aaron began to ponder enthusiastically.

"It's simple! Just apply to leave this region or pretend you're injured and hide for these few days!" Merlin seemed to be very experienced in this.

.....

The dark elves' offensive was not limited to just the eastern region of Twilight Zone.

The northern region had also suffered the charge of the dark elves. City after city fell until a few rank 2 Magi struck out, finally stabilising the

situation. Still, they had been able to push the battlefront inwards by a few hundred meters. They had even dispatched elite Underground Winter Spider knights who seemed to be scouts sent for reconnaissance.

The eastern region was comparatively quiet. The tripartite defense of Dolon, Wakeshire, and Sadoor, with the continuous supply of troops, maintained an uneasy stalemate. Even so, capitalising on the endless darkness creatures as cannon fodder, the dark elves had caused many injuries to the Magi defending the posts.

It was a given that numerous acolytes would die, but even some official Magi had fallen. As for regular soldiers and knights? Too many of them were lost to even count.

In the blink of an eye, ten years passed. Leylin had been relieved a few times and periodically returned to Nature's Alliance.

In this period of time, however, he kept a low profile and seldom did anything flashy. Hence, he did not have a large reputation.

Only he knew how much he had improved during this period of time.

"Leylin! I've received the heart of the Earthen Fiend. There are fifty here, and I've sent them to your lab!" A rune lit up and transmitted Fendix's voice.

"Thanks a lot! I'll get in touch with you later." Leylin answered delightfully. "I've finally gotten it! Now all the requirements have been met!"

He hurried to the laboratory, where a Magus dressed in black robes was waiting for him. The man respectfully bowed his head, saying, "This is the heart of the Earthen Fiend that Lord Fendix wanted me to pass on to you. Please sign here to show that you received it."

"En!" Leylin nodded and took the ingredients. After checking every single one, he nodded in satisfaction. He waved his arm over the piece of parchment the Magus in black robes proffered, and a black snake imprint formed immediately.

Seeing this, the Magus bowed and respectfully left.

Leylin entered his laboratory and activated spell formations for isolation and defense. A layer of various lit runes began to circulate outside.

“With all the ingredients here, I can finally attempt to brew potions!” Smiling, Leylin looked at his stats.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 21.1, Agility: 14.4, Vitality: 29.9, Spiritual force: 127.9, Magic power: 127 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force).]

He had spent every day of the past ten years training in his high-grade meditation technique, slowly tempering his spiritual force. Over the course of his training of Kemoyin’s Pupil, he began to feel that the issue of irritability that was caused by his premature advancement was slowly corrected.

Given the quick pace of his advancement last time, an unstable foundation was only to be expected.

However, all of that was made up for in the past ten years.

Chapter 353: Giant Serpent's Breath Potion

Ten years was a long time.

In this period, besides training in his meditation technique, Leylin constantly absorbed more information regarding Twilight Zone to supplement his A.I. Chip's database.

Given that he was already a rank 2 Magus, he was respected everywhere. To his benefit, most guilds simply gave up all the information they had to him.

In addition, he'd exchanged his contribution points for large amounts of the best research in Twilight Zone. This new research synergized perfectly with the data he had already stored from the south coast.

"A.I. Chip! Begin experimentation on brewing the "Giant Serpent's Breath" Potion!" Leylin's eyes flashed as he commanded. Immediately after, with a pat of his spatial pouch, all sorts of ingredients filled the table.

The Giant Serpent's Breath Potion was an unexpected gain from the storage of a small-scale guild in Twilight Zone.

It was originally an incomplete recipe for an ancient spiritual force potion. It was originally not named such, but Leylin and the A.I. Chip had modified to suit Warlocks in general, and his own Giant Kemoyin Serpent bloodline in particular. Thus, it had been renamed after all the changes.

In other words, he had adjusted the foundations of the ancient formula to suit his individual needs.

After he'd advanced to become a rank 2 Warlock, all the previous ancient potions he had gathered, such as the Tears of Mary, were now useless to him.

On the other hand, this Giant Serpent's Breath was the fruit of ten years of laborious research. It was a potion capable of increasing the spiritual

force of Warlocks.

Pitifully, Leylin had been unable to find a substitute for the heart of the Earthen Fiend until now, and he was not able to proceed any further. Training in ancient high-grade meditation techniques was about relentless effort which would eventually pay off. Time was of the essence.

But at this point, the improvement in Leylin's spiritual force had begun to slow down.

This was common when cultivating using high-grade meditation techniques. The farther one went, the more difficult it was to advance. Sadly, the increasing intensity of the war, as well as the deaths of several official Magi had left Leylin feeling a rising urgency.

The heart of the Earthen Fiend came at the right time!

After ten years of hard work, all the hidden damage to Leylin's body had been healed. He could now continue to advance his strength using potions. This was obviously a good thing for him.

But that was not all. Leylin shut his eyes and took over Merlin's role in Aaron's ring.

Aaron was now ten years older, but due to the unique ability of Magi, he still looked rather young on the outside.

"Finally... I'm finally back!" Aaron stroked a roadsign, looking emotional.

This was where the headquarters of his guild was located. Seeing the unchanged architecture, Aaron felt like nothing had changed.

"Ha, Aaron? Are you not dead yet? Weren't you at Dolon City? Why are you back? Did you desert your position?" a young magician with an aquiline nose said with an incredulous look on his face.

Immediately, large numbers of acolytes came out of their rooms, following behind a young man, as if grouping around a revered leader. Behind him was a young woman who was glancing at Aaron with a complicated expression.

The magician at the center was dressed in luxurious robes. Although he

only had the energy fluctuations of a level 3 acolyte, he wore quite a few magic artifacts.

“Aaron?” He furrowed his brows, and then looked at the woman behind him. “Is this that Aaron?”

“Yes!” The young woman nodded and grabbed the young man’s hand, “But I no longer have any relationship with him. I was the one to suggest that he go to Dolon. Did you forget that?”

“Ah, yes, that did happen!” The young noble patted his head.

Aaron, who was watching this, looked increasingly gloomy.

“I don’t care how you came back. Just remember this—she’s mine. Behave, or else...”

The young man yawned, bored. Waving Aaron away just as one would a beggar, he prepared to leave. The surrounding acolytes all snickered, matching his actions.

“Hehe, what a great show!” Aaron suddenly lifted his head, and the spiritual force of an official Magus suddenly burst out of his body, sweeping across the area.

Many of the acolytes were paralyzed and fell to the ground, not even daring to move.

“Ah... An official Magus!” The young noble’s expression changed, while the facial muscles of the woman twitched.

She had never imagined that the trash she’d abandoned would one day come this far.

Her regret lasted only a moment before it morphed into fear and resentment.

‘Destroy him! Destroy him!’

She may feel betrayal and resentment now, but such was the truth. The young woman’s expression distorted further.

“Which Magus has arrived?”

Xiu! A black figure flashed, and all of a sudden, a white-haired old man appeared.

“Mentor, I’m back!” Aaron bowed towards this old man.

“Ah! You-You’re Aaron!” The old man rubbed his eyes, thinking he had seen an illusion.

.....

A few hours later, in the old man’s office.

“Haha, this is great! Not only have you regained your innate talent, you’ve also used the simplified version of Blazing Heart to advance into an official Magus, and even accumulated enough merits points to return...”

The old man’s face was flushed red, and it was evident that he had communicated with the people at Dolon.

While Aaron accompanied him in his laughter, he was sneering deep inside.

Information about him was not a secret. If his mentor had been keeping tabs on him, then he would long since have found out. This display meant that this ‘mentor’ of his had assumed he would die at Dolon and had long since given up on him.

However, he was an adult who had experienced a decade in the warzone. He had long since grown adept at hiding his inner emotions.

“Mentor, I would like to apply for access to train in Blazing Heart, as well as the treatment that official Magi in the guild have!” Aaron spoke indifferently.

“Ah, that’s right! You should train in that since the simplified version is useless after you become an official Magus!”

The old Magus nodded, “As long as you pass the test to confirm your meditation technique, everything you request will be granted!”

Aaron touched the black ring on his finger and laughed nonchalantly. Techniques to check for the aura of a meditation technique were invented by these guilds to screen traitors and spies.

Deep down, he was communicating with Merlin, “Grandpa Merlin, why do we have to ask for Blazing Heart?”

Over the past ten years, as Merlin saved Aaron’s life multiple times and taught him a lot, the two had grown very close.’

“Even if you train in Sacred Flame, you’ll still need to put up a front!”

Merlin appeared in Aaron’s mind in the form of an old wise man as he slowly explained the situation, “You were initially a worthless acolyte without a high-grade meditation technique. If you didn’t gain a guild’s high-grade meditation technique as a front, how else would you explain your advancement from now? Also, don’t forget the guild’s resources. I have a magic artifact’s blueprint for you. If you can craft it, it will definitely increase your strength by a huge margin!”

“What magic artifact?” Merlin’s words piqued Aaron’s curiosity.

“Meteor Sword, a high-grade magic artifact. Although I still have the designs of more powerful artifacts, they’re all too much for you right now...” Merlin said nonchalantly.

Aaron nodded. With his current strength as an official Magus, it was practically impossible for him to make magic artifacts. Only rank 2 Magi had the opportunity to have a high-grade magic artifact, and for him to get one this early was already very lucky.

“I have to help find Grandpa Merlin’s other fragments sooner.” Aaron was currently feeling extremely proud of his achievements.

.....

[Beep! Recorded the high-grade meditation technique, Blazing Flame. Saving into high-grade meditation technique database!]

A few days later, the A.I. Chip prompted thus. Aaron had received the high-grade meditation technique, which meant that Leylin got it as well.

Although Leylin salivated over the power of destiny, the high-grade meditation techniques of other guilds still attracted him greatly.

Other than to keep away unwanted suspicions, this was another reason

he didn't use his own acolytes for this experiment.

As a bonus, Leylin was now bringing into reality the sword he had designed.

Meteor Sword was a Warlock-exclusive weapon he had designed for himself. He had drawn inspiration for it from Rays of Dawn, the middle-grade magic artifact of the south coast. He had spent much time and effort on it, and it could be said that most of the time he had spent in Potter Town had been dedicated to this experiment.

However, the materials for this Warlock-exclusive weapon were far too hard to find. Even Leylin did not possess all of them.

Hence, he intentionally disseminated the blueprint parts to his 'apprentices' learning Sacred Flame, using them to gather the materials.

Their ability to see the future gave them a high success rate at this.

"I also lack some raw materials for my potions. I can get them to look for those as well!" Leylin touched his chin and had an idea.

The seeds he had planted were now beginning to bear fruit. Through distributing numerous 'grandpas,' he had picked out a few talented acolytes and taught them the modified version of Sacred Flame. He was now gathering all the information from their foresight without being anywhere near them. After collating all the information, Leylin managed to roughly discern what the future held.

He had even seen himself in some of the acolytes' predictions. Of course, these scenes were all intercepted, so the acolytes were unable to receive them.

Suddenly, Leylin's brows furrowed.

He saw a scene in front of him. A blonde female acolyte's eyes were rolling back, her body trembling uncontrollably.

Scattered images were sent to Leylin.

Chapter 354: Longbottom Strikes

In the many scattered images, there was also a figure that Leylin was extremely familiar with.

“Baelin?” A smile crept upon his lips.

.....

“Are you sure it’s here?” Baelin asked, swallowing hard. The pitch-black hole in front of him seemed like the mouth of some weird creature. The aura on his body rose rapidly, nearly exceeding the limits of a regular human.

“We dark elves get all our Underground Winter Spiders from this hallowed place. It is where the Underground Winter Spider Emperor lives. Do you really think I’d risk my life to bring you here if I wasn’t sure?” Memphis rolled his eyes.

“As long as you can kill or dominate it, the Underground Winter Spider knights would immediately fall apart, and this war might just end,” he said with a sigh.

“How powerful is that Underground Winter Spider Emperor?” Baelin felt uncomfortable looking at the hole as if he had been laid bare before someone’s eyes.

“At least rank 2!” Memphis waved his arms, “But luckily, it’s deep in slumber right now, and won’t notice you.”

“I can’t help, though,” he added, “Any dark elves who’ve signed contracts with Underground Winter Spiders will wake it up as soon as they enter the vicinity!”

Not all ancient creatures were at the Morning Star realm. Morning Star Magi were considered formidable even in ancient times, so how could such strong creatures be common?

Baelin and Memphis had a very simple plan: they would either kill the Underground Winter Spider Emperor or force it to submit, a move so drastic which would cause enough damage to the dark elves’ military that

they would be forced to withdraw,

“...Fine,” Baelin huffed.

He turned and said, “I’m ready. Come!” In front of him was a bizarre lump of meatball that looked like a huge poached egg. What was even more terrifying was the presence of dozens of eyes on the thing, all open and staring at Baelin without blinking.

“How many times must I tell you? Even if you received my owner’s inheritance and advanced to become a rank 1 Magus, the current you are far from an opponent for rank 2 Magi. Leave alone you, even with me joining the fray, we won’t survive this encounter!” The lump said, blinking. It had the delicate voice of a child.

“That was an order!” Baelin’s expression darkened.

“Alright, alright! Whatever! I finally find a new owner, and he turns out to be an idiot!” The egg-like creature shook its head.

With the order given, it shot over to Baelin’s body, extending countless meaty feelers that fused with him. Baelin grew much larger than before as the meat solidified and formed a dull red armour patterned with tens of eyes, something that made it seem very mysterious.

The moment the armour formed, Baelin’s aura broke through the limits of humans, stabilising at the strength of an official Magus.

“This map and amulet have been passed down from generation to generation. I wish you luck in this venture!” Memphis sincerely blessed him.

“Thank you!” Baelin answered, a pair of metallic large red wings spreading behind him before he charged into the hole.

The journey to escort Memphis back home had been arduous. Baelin, Jenny, and the dark elf faced danger after danger, all while being hunted down by people from both sides.

Fortunately, they had managed to survive the ordeal and infiltrate the Dark Elven Empire, getting him to a safe area. In addition, Baelin had

acquired a unique inheritance which had led him along the path of a Bio Booster, a branch of ancient Magi.

After gaining this inheritance, Baelin's progress soared, until he became an official Magus.

With the Bio Boosting armour that he had obtained and inherited as well, his strength was beyond that of a regular official Magus.

The moment he jumped into the hole, he suddenly felt as if the coin he hung around his neck heated up...

In the laboratory.

Leylin glanced at the golden crystal in his hands. Golden liquid now occupied more than half the volume within and appeared to be glittering splendidly.

"As expected of the child of destiny. This rate of improvement is something even I might not be able to match!" Leylin sighed.

Back then, he had tested Baelin for his aptitude, but it had appeared to be meagre. It was basically impossible for him to advance to be an official Magus.

In addition, Leylin was only teaching him out of curiosity and playfulness, and would naturally not impart knowledge only Magi were privy to.

Now though, destiny had played its hand. Baelin's strength was growing boundlessly, to the point that he could now affect the results of the war.

In ancient times, the spread of ideas between different worlds, as well as the creativity and tolerance of ancient Magi, had led to the formation of many different branches. Some examples were Bloodline Warlocks, Elemental Bards, Branded Swordsmen, Steel Knights, and even the recently rediscovered Bio Boosters.

Leylin recalled the information he had recently found from an ancient volume about Bio Boosters.

These ancient Magi were extremely strange and required their inheritors

to have the aptitude to become both Knights and Magi.

In addition, they had to have Bio Boosting armour!

After obtaining the armour, a Bio Booster's strength would rise sharply, and after fusing, the armor would automatically change the body of the host; this strengthened them continuously.

In addition, this armour could be inherited. The moment a Bio Booster gained the armour left behind by a higher ranked Bio Booster, they would immediately gain more strength.

In Leylin's eyes, Baelin was quite suited to become a Bio Booster.

"Destiny..."

Leylin sniggered and left the laboratory.

.....

"Fendix, thank you for the hearts of Earthen Fiends. I'll make it up to you for whatever I haven't paid you!"

Holding a cup of coffee, Leylin chatted with Magus Fendix, who was in front of him.

"These are all small matters. You don't need to be so polite!" Fendix laughed but did not reject him. Magi were quite clear about this.

"I just came out from the laboratory. How is the situation with the war?" Leylin asked after some small talk.

"It's still the same. The tripartite defense is barely holding off the matriarchs. All our manpower is being whittled away." Fendix's expression showed his excitement.

"Quite a few darkness creatures have been eliminated. The regions we've given up already are enough for them to proliferate, so they've begun to show signs of retreat. All sorts of voices are already sounding among the inner circles of the dark elves. Although the matriarchs are currently suppressing them, they, too, have to worry about the repercussions of such an act..."

Leylin nodded. He knew that there were dissenting voices among the dark elves, and then there were Baelin's actions as well.

"I reckon that if there aren't any large changes, this war will end within five years!" Fendix seemed to heave a sigh of relief.

This conclusion was about the same as what Leylin had come up with, and he nodded as well.

Bang!

The door to the parlor was suddenly pushed open, and a female rank 2 Magus entered, looking grim.

"Something's happened in the north!"

.....

A while earlier...

Potti City was the center of the north's defense. The human armies, backed by numerous Magi, confronted the coalition of darkness creatures and dark elves at that location.

A young Magus passed through a long paved pathway and arrived before a golden door.

"Magus Longbottom, is anything wrong?" the two Magi at the golden door asked.

"I have something pressing to report. Please let me see Lord Yade!" Longbottom looked to be in a hurry.

"Something pressing to report? Fine! We'll pass on the message!" The two Magi exchanged a glance, and one of them immediately ran inside.

A moment later, the Magus returned and nodded, "Lord Yade is willing to see you!"

Longbottom immediately entered through the door.

Behind the golden door was a large room, with a milky-white radiance around it.

A Magus that looked very youthful wore a loose and comfortable robe

and was sitting behind a large writing table.

“Longbottom greets the great protector of the North!” Longbottom respectfully greeted while half-kneeling.

“It’s little Longbottom! What’s wrong?” An aged voice was produced from the young man’s mouth.

“I found a small group of dark elves while on patrol. I discovered this after the fight!” Longbottom respectfully held a black scroll above his head.

A streak of blue light flashed, and it scanned the scroll up and down.

“No abnormal energy reactions! Level of danger: O!” A gentle female voice sounded, and Longbottom trembled. He knew this was the voice of a spirit genie.

“Let me see!” With a wave of the young man’s arm, the scroll in Longbottom’s arms flew to the table and was unfurled.

Something that looked like a map appeared in front of the young man’s eyes, with all sorts of red markings appearing all over it.

“Oh? This is?”

Magus Yade began to look grim, his body automatically leaning forward. Suddenly, the situation changed!

A translucent black seed appeared from the map and turned into a ray of light, entering Yade’s forehead.

“A parasitic seed! You-!” Yade was enraged.

Right after that, large amounts of black tendrils and vines wrapped up his body, sealing him within.

“Warning! Warning! Intruder!”

The spirit genie’s voice became frigid.

Powerful magical rays formed from a powerful spell illuminated the room.

“I’ve been waiting for this!” A fiendish smile appeared on Longbottom’s face, and he waved.

A black ray travelled by Magus Yade and destroyed the oil painting behind him, revealing a complicated spell formation.

Chapter 355: Revolution

“The core of the spirit genie!” Longbottom sighed slightly, unhesitatingly releasing a shockwave to destroy the spell formation.

Tss tss... Instantly, the spirit genie’s voice faded, and Potti City immediately grew chaotic.

Rumble!

As if long since prepared, the opposing dark elves and beast wave unleashed their most ferocious barrage of attacks.

While the Magi were engrossed in battle, the defensive spell formation that had lost its spirit genie sputtered out.

“What are you doing?” Two Magi immediately rushed out.

“Life Absorption!” Longbottom’s expression remained unchanged as he waved his hands. A few green beams flashed on the two, and they began to age visibly. Their life force was rapidly depleting.

“Begin localization!” Longbottom took a glance at Yade, who was still sealed, and produced some materials and began setting something up.

Rumble!

Minutes later, with the guidance of a spell formation that glowed purple, eight large spider legs pierced through, tearing the ceiling apart. On top of the giant spider that entered was a completely naked girl.

This girl had a slight smile on her face, her skin pale and ears pointy. She radiated a captivating charm.

“Greetings, matriarch!” Longbottom immediately bowed.

“Well done, Longbottom!” The young girl giggled, causing Longbottom’s heart to leap.

“Though you’ve wasted a portion of a precious Earthen Fetal Membrane, it’s still not a bad result to be able to deal with a clone of your opponent. After all, that person’s a peak rank 2 existence!”

The young girl spoke slowly. Just her voice was enough for his heart to be inflamed with desire.

Rank 2 Magi were powerhouses in their own right. If one was prepared, even the dark elves' matriarchs would find them difficult to deal with. Additionally, there were bloodline detection spell formations scattered throughout Potti City. Any dark creature that entered would immediately be discovered.

But Longbottom was different! He was a pure human, and what more a Magus. Though he was a wandering Magus, he had some achievements and was well received.

Earthen Fetal Membrane was a top-class treasure of the Dark Elven Empire used to conceal one's aura.

Only when all sorts of conditions were favorable to him could he make use of the parasitic seed.

This had made Longbottom very proud of himself, but her words had surprised him greatly.

"Clone?"

"Yes! Aren't you going to come out?" The girl giggled while speaking at the air beside her.

Xiu Xiu! Two pure white arrows of light shattered the tendrils, revealing a hazy human figure.

This figure transformed into a long line and shot out, entering another figure that had just appeared.

"This is the real body of Protector Yade!" Longbottom stared at the figure overhead that looked exactly the same as the one before, his fists tightly clenched.

"I didn't expect Her Majesty, the Empress to come personally !"

Yade, who was floating in mid-air, paid no attention to Longbottom who was on the ground. His eyes were riveted on the young girl before him, gaze tinged with fear.

“Hehe... With your clone heavily injured, how much of your strength can you really use? 70%? Or 80%?”

The girl could not stop laughing, while her back tore open.

.....

A monster that was a cross between a human and a spider appeared in the air, and a massive darkness drowned out Protector Yade...

Not far away in the horizon, Magi were stunned to find that, besides the dark elves and the horde of darkness creatures, dwarves and gnomes had joined the battle.

Half a day later, an earth-shattering piece of news spread throughout Twilight Zone.

Potti City had fallen! The Empress of the Dark Elven Empire had personally acted and killed Protector Yade of the northern region!

The dwarven tribes and gnome kingdom had also entered the battle, and the entire northern Twilight region fell into enemy hands, entering a reign of terror.

Still in Potti City.

The master of this region had changed. Squads of elite Underground Winter Spider knights patrolled the streets, and one could occasionally see dwarven warriors and gnome puppeteers passing through.

In the great palace hall at the heart of the city.

The Empress summoned Longbottom in.

“You did very well this time, Longbottom!” The girl spoke from the bottom of her heart. If not for him plotting against their opponent’s clone, she could not have killed him as easily.

“It is my honour to be able to serve the Empress.” Longbottom gazed at the girl’s absolutely beautiful face, seeming enchanted.

“Now, I need you to travel to the central region and drum up hate against Magi.” The girl did not seem disgusted by his gaze, instead of

wriggling her body to expose more of her skin to the Magus before her.

“Hate against Magi?” Longbottom could not understand the reasoning behind this.

“Yes. Magi and the nobility all hold large amounts of knowledge and power in their grasp, restricting peasants and regular humans from obtaining them. Animosity, abhorrence, and anguish have been building up through the generations. What we need now is a tipping point, an opportunity for it all to explode into a huge uproar!”

The girl continued quietly, “I need you to go to the central region and cause unrest in the name of a revolution. When the time comes, you can even spread high-grade meditation techniques.”

“...Yes...” Longbottom answered after a pause. He would cause a rebellion at his enemy’s side, and then flank the enemy from both sides.

He knew that under the governance of Magi, commoners had been living miserably. The Magi and nobles enjoyed everything, while the rest had to suffer from day to night. Even then, they might not even get a good meal out of it. Crimes could be pinned on them for offending nobility, or in the worst case scenario, they would be killed without recourse!

It was difficult for commoners to be allowed to grow even if they had the aptitude

Even if they were lucky enough to enter a guild, they would still be discriminated against and even treated as guinea pigs or cannon fodder.

Of course, if one only had resentment and no strength, they would only be mercilessly massacred by Magi. After all, power was still in the hands of Magi.

But it was different now. Magi now were confronting a great enemy, and their mental and physical efforts were mostly spent.

In addition, there were calls for a rebellion.

Sometimes, resounding catchphrase and beautiful promises for the future could attract many hot-blooded teenagers to turn their heads.

If they were given some power, it would be a disaster.

When that happened, there might be internal strife amongst Magi. How many people would die? How much blood would be spilled?

Longbottom knew this very well, but he had no thoughts of opposing this, nor any pity. All he had in him was the thrill of taking revenge.

“Leylin, I’ll make you suffer tens and hundreds of time for what you did to me. I promise!”

Longbottom howled in his heart.

If Leylin was here, he would find that this traitor called Longbottom was the little boy, Longbottom, he had played around with in Potter Town.

“En! Very good. When you’re back, I’ll carry out the bloodline changing ceremony. From then on, you’ll be part of us dark elves, even in blood.”

The girl nodded.

“Many thanks, Empress!” Longbottom touched his head to the ground.

.....

“Longbottom?” Hearing the rank 2 female Magus’ words, Leylin suddenly had the urge to cry and laugh as well.

“Though the name might just be a coincidence, I have a feeling that this traitor to our race, Longbottom, is the same person as the one in Potter Town!”

Leylin sighed ruefully. When he had found out that this boy had left to seek better opportunities, he had not taken it seriously. The chances of success were much too low.

Unexpectedly, he had actually succeeded and even become a rank 1 Magus!

Without proper tools, Leylin could not tell a Magus’ aptitude. Hence, he did not know that Longbottom had the talent to become a Magus.

“But this is interesting. Looks like Potter Town is a place where Twilight Zone’s destiny converges.” Leylin touched his chin, deep in thought.

Potter Town had seemed like a regular little common town and had probably already fallen into enemy hands.

However, it was surprising that it had given birth to both Baelin and Longbottom, the two darlings of destiny.

“Baelin and Longbottom are like the two sides of a coin. One day, they will meet again, and that day will be when Twilight Zone’s power of destiny is most concentrated!”

Leylin suddenly had a strange premonition.

“It’s quite interesting being able to shape history...” Strictly speaking, he had personally created this entire situation. It was in Potter Town where everything began. It made him feel like the destiny of Twilight Zone was in his hands.

But this only left Leylin sneering.

“In that case, let me be the one to end this all!”

These thoughts merely flashed in his mind, while the other two rank 2 Magi’s expressions were filled with worry.

“Now that the entire northern region is gone, we have lost a fifth of our power.”

Fendix caressed a ring on his hand that had a ruby the size of a pebble, a dark cloud seemingly hanging over him.

“Not only that. Besides the dark elves and horde of darkness creatures, even the dwarves and gnomes have appeared!”

The female Magus smiled wryly.

Twilight Zone was a small area, and the subterranean world had all sorts of incredible races. The humans and dark elves were the two largest powers, but one could not underestimate the gnomes and dwarves either.

When they joined forces, the humans were definitely in a disadvantageous position.

“This war could result in genocide!” Fendix drew in a deep breath, “We

need to get the war council and mobilise everything we have...”

“Before that, we need to first deal with the threats outside.”

A golden ring on Leylin’s finger lit up, and he immediately straightened his back, “The dark elves are on the offensive once again, and it can be confirmed that they have three regiments of elite Underground Winter Spider Knights, backed by three matriarchs.”

“Those wretched pointy-eared bastards...” Fendix got up, furious.

Chapter 356: Red Mist

Emergency sirens were blaring throughout Dolon City.

Leylin, Fendix, and the others floated across to the front of the city, watching the scene outside.

Ten years where life and resources were constantly lost had visibly reduced the numbers of the horde of darkness creatures. The newest reports suggested that the beast emperors had already made plans to withdraw their troops and end the war.

If not for the fall of the north and interference of the dwarves and gnomes, the war was on track to end in a few years. The current situation was different, however. The humans of the subterranean world were now facing the possibility of extinction.

“Underground Winter Spider knights! And they’re elites!”

Leylin looked up. Three regiments of Underground Winter Spider knights

Huge spider legs trod the ground silently, their dark elf riders wreathed in exquisite thin armor that looked ornamental. The surface of the armors was composed of intricate patterns. Matched with the handsome faces and lances, they seemed like a royal parade to Leylin.

Although these knights seemed extravagant and pretentious, the searing bloodlust they emanated was tangible. This was something only battle-hardened elites with fearless hearts could have.

“These are the dark elven royal family’s knights. I didn’t expect them to be sent out!” Fendix looked grim.

“Elite Underground Winter Spider knights are slightly more powerful than our Grand Knights. Those at the level of vice-captain and above are even as powerful as official Magi. Three formations of a thousand each, there are three thousand here!” The female Magus inhaled sharply.

“They’re planning to conquer Dolon City in one go!!”

Leylin sighed lightly, “Do we need to act?”

“There’s no other way!” Fendix smiled wryly, “But their matriarchs are sure to obstruct as well, and we have no guarantee that we can win against them. I can already feel the power of the abyss emanating from their bodies...”

Cities were usually watched over by rank 2 Magi. The opposing camp had three matriarchs whose mission was to tie down the rank 2 Magi of the defending city. If they could not, the three rank 2 Magi would cooperate to cast a few large-scaled magic spells which would decimate these troops.

“There’s no choice. Let’s use ‘it’.” Leylin suddenly exclaimed.

“Hm?” Fendix chanced a glance at Leylin. “That’s our trump card that we’re planning to use in the final battle...”

“This is already the final battle!” the female rank 2 Magus interrupted before Leylin could answer, “I agree!”

“Alright, I’ll agree too!” Fendix glanced at the large dark elven army and laughed wryly, “This truly might be the final battle.”

With the three Magi cooperating, a unique order was sent down using secret imprints, and under the lead of the Magi, the troops on the ground shifted some special items onto the city walls.

They were numerous giant casks. They were like the wooden barrels found in bars to store beer, with firm iron hoops on either side keeping them steady. There were also letters of the Twilight Zone written on them in blood red, indicating danger.

“Now, let us wait and see!”

The three Magi exchanged glances, and then fixed their attention on the fighting.

“Attack!” With the signal from the dark elves at the other side, a large wave of darkness creatures charged towards them.

“Engage the third layer of defense!”

Fluorescent light exploded at the walls, revealing unending defensive runes. Large amounts of energy particles brought with them a terrifying destructive power, launching outwards.

The darkness creatures charging over were injured by energy particles of multiple elements, covering their bodies with wounds. It resulted in a rain of flesh and blood.

A few of the more powerful ones dodged the attack. They climbed up on the carcasses of their comrades and clashed with the soldiers and Magi on the walls.

In a moment, blood and fire exploded!

The Magi and knights on the walls bellowed, and all sorts of spells and energy fluctuations were released. Numerous darkness creatures fell from the walls.

This scene had repeated often in the past, and each time the dark elves would end up retreating, which ended the fight. Now, however, things seemed to have changed. The horde continued to charge with reddened eyes, unfearing of death.

Tak tak tak! Regular explosions sounded. The elite Underground Winter Spider knights seemed to have received an order, as they began to advance..

Although they were merely 3000 strong, they were like a surge of steel flooding over when they acted together.

“Go!” Underground Winter Spiders with barbs on their legs easily climbed up the city wall like monkeys.

For darkness creatures, the city wall was lofty and difficult to reach, but for these Underground Winter Spider Knights, they were like a level road.

“Attack!” One of them rushed towards the wall, brandishing the black lance in his hand.

Multiple snowy-white pointed javelins were sent thrusting like blooming flowers, and a few soldiers in leather armour collapsed, blood splattering

everywhere. Amongst them, there was even a knight in heavy armour!

In front of the elite Underground Winter Spider Knights, regular soldiers and knights could not take on even a single blow, and only Grand Knights had a chance to win.

“Secondary Energy Fireball!”

“Vine Winding!”

“Icy Pearl!” The magicians waiting on top of the city walls immediately acted, and the knights who had just rushed up the walls were drowned in the colourful rays of magic spells.

Their powerful bodies and mounts that they had always been proud of were torn into pieces by various spells.

However, the surviving Underground Winter Spider Knights still charged on fearlessly, and many captains and vice-captains launched forth with spells of their own, clashing with the Magi on the walls.

“Hands of Corrosion!” A knight in gleaming armour, riding a larger spider than its peers, called out loudly. Numerous black palms extended from the air and advanced towards the opposing Magi.

“Ah!” A level 3 acolyte’s face was caught by one of the black hands and immediately wasted away, blood and flesh wearing away.

“Be careful! He’s a vice-captain and has the strength of an official Magus!”

A middle-aged Magus with white hair spoke in a low voice, his innate defensive spell formation flickering.

“The situation doesn’t look good,” Leylin commented, watching the scene below.

At this moment, the three Magi felt a few bursts of spiritual force aimed at them that equalled their own strengths being released from the enemy camp. If they dared intervene, they would be faced with a terrifying attack by the matriarchs.

In a situation where the higher-ranked forces were level, whoever first

made the first move would be at a disadvantage.

Thankfully, Leylin and the others were not planning on doing so.

From the looks of it, though, only rank 2 Magi could change the outcome.

“Let’s begin!” Leylin spoke lightly, the apathy in his eyes becoming more evident.

“The command has been sent down. I only hope the matriarchs won’t go crazy and fight with us!” The ring on Fendix’s finger flashed red as he smiled wryly.

At this moment, it looked like the official Magi on the city walls had received the command.

“Begin! Activate!” They shouted, and all sorts of spells were aimed at the casks, causing them to explode into fragments.

Rumble!

The wooden boards exploded open, and the red liquid within spilled to the ground.

This red liquid was very muddy and looked to be some red wine that had yet to settle. After reaching the ground, it became volatile and created a red mist.

In that moment, the top of the city wall was wrapped in red mist.

“Be careful of the toxic attack! Activate your defensive runes!”

A dark elf in golden armour ordered.

Weng Weng! In the twinkling of an eye, multi-coloured rays rose from the dark elven knights’ armours.

After being wrapped within this layer of light, the knights charged towards their enemies once again, undaunted.

They were very confident in the durability of their bodies, since they were members of a high-energy race. Dark elves might have lower reproductive abilities, but the durability of their bodies far surpassed that

of humans. This racial ability extended to the immunity to many toxins.

It wasn't as if the humans hadn't considered using poison, but most poisons that were deadly to humans only left dark elves feeling slightly giddy, or gave them a nosebleed.

Using poison would only hurt them more, and lead to more city guards dying. Thus, after a few attempts, the humans had given up on this method.

Now, however, the situation was slightly different.

"Hm?"

An Underground Winter Spider knight rushed up the city wall and sent a Grand Knight flying. Just as he was about to stab his lance into his opponent's heart, he suddenly lost his grip, and the lance fell to the ground.

Recalling the short burst of weakness, the knight wondered, 'What's going on? How did these toxins paralyse me? Didn't I already activate the runes that defend against this?'

The sudden realisation that the red mist had passed through the defensive layer without obstruction alarmed him. It was as if these runes were fake.

Large numbers of yellow pustules and blisters erupted all over his skin, bursting as quickly as they had formed. The knight screamed out, miserably.

"Attack!" A ray of light flashed, and the Grand Knight that had been sent flying grasped this opportunity and brandished the giant steel sword in his hands, slashing it at this dark elf's neck.

A line appeared, which soon turned into a fountain of blood.

This dark elf's delicate, pale neck was severed, its skull rolling on the ground.

Chapter 357: Alicia

Similar events occurred all along the city walls. Even the Underground Winter Spiders weren't spared. Their eight legs crumbled down and their eyes dimmed, following which they were overrun by stampeding troops...

This frightening effectiveness in battle managed to surprise even Fendix who was hovering in the air. "This toxin is truly very strong! If we manage to produce it in large quantities..."

His eyes beamed with excitement.

"It isn't as simple as you'd think!" Leylin smiled bitterly, "I specifically concocted this using plant concentrate based on the anatomy of dark elves. On its own, it isn't a toxin, which is why it can pass through their defensive runes. Once it enters their bodies and begins circulation, it begins to react with their endocrine system. In a matter of moments, the benign gas transforms into neural poison.

"This is just a petty trick that makes use of a gap in their defenses. Once this battle ends, the dark elves will change their runes to protect against this method of attack, which will render it useless in the end!"

In fact, Leylin based this poison off his own rank 2 spell—Toxic Bile. With the help of Nature's Alliance's research, he managed to get the approval of the joint conference, which only helped him improve upon it.

"Even so, Sir Leylin's research on dark elves has far surpassed ours." The female Magus showed admiration at Leylin's accomplishment despite him downplaying it. That alone showed the level of Leylin's ability in alchemy and the depth of his research on dark elves.

"After this, I'm afraid that even I will have to pay a visit to the joint conference to learn from Sir Leylin's works," she said as she broke into a smile.

"I would gladly welcome any discussion with you, what's more, any fresh thoughts you may have on the subject," Leylin said humbly.

"This isn't the right time to speak about this, the matriarchs are about to

act!" She pointed at the dark elves' camp across them where the spiritual force was climbing to its peak.

"They seem to have become anxious now, and might leap into action at any moment. We should prepare." Fendix took out a short black gentleman's cane. A sparkling diamond, as large as an egg, was embedded into the top.

Leylin smiled without saying a word.

Nearly three thousand of their elite Underground Winter Spider knights were fighting in this battle, half of their entire force. It was only to be expected that the turn of the situation had made them anxious.

At this moment, darkness energy particles gathered together, and a strong wave from a spell arose from the opposite side.

"Black Torrential Rain!!"

A sweet female voice was accompanied by a large amount of water vapour condensing above Dolon city. This was followed by a storm of endless black raindrops descending upon the city.

When the black raindrops and red mist came into contact, an explosion sounded out. They fused into a charred-black liquid that dropped to the floor, revealing the Underground Winter Spider knights who were lying on the ground, on the verge of death.

Leylin's poison was only powerful against the elite Underground Winter Spider Knights. A rank 1 Magus could use the energy in their body to resist it. As for matriarchs who were rank 2 existences? It could not affect them in the slightest.

"Peng! Peng! Peng! Peng!"

The ground cracked apart, and numerous strands of black hair emerged from the depths. These snake-like hairs wound around those knights who were still alive and pulled them back.

In just a moment, the hairs had managed to pull back a dozen miles, bringing the knights to safety.

Still, half of the Underground Winter Spider knights had already perished.

“You...!!!” A few rage-filled voices emerged from the sky above the enemy camp. The black vapors dissipated, revealing the appearances of the three dark elf matriarchs.

Leylin examined them.

These matriarchs all possessed the ravishing beauty intrinsic to dark elves. The revealing clothing made of a leather-like material displayed their voluptuous bodies and their hands were adorned with thorn whips.

‘Yup! They definitely resemble the dominatrixes from my previous world!’ Leylin thought as he rolled his eyes.

At this moment, the opposing three matriarchs were already on the verge of exploding into anger, powerful spells taking form in their hands.

“You guys dared to go against the agreement and take action!” Fendix touched the short cane which he was holding and remained stoic.

“Humans! How dare you use such despicable means to bring harm upon my brave soldiers, I will behead the lot of you and gift them to Her Majesty!” The matriarch at the center lashed out in the dark elven language, paying no heed to Fendix’s accusation. She wore the most revealing outfit of the three, and the two golden rings at her bosom gave off a sensual vibe.

“Hehe! Since when did the dark elves that are renowned for being sinister and cunning start accusing others of using despicable means?” The female Magus said with a sneer before Leylin had a chance to speak.

”Speaking anymore is useless! Take action!!” Leylin exclaimed.

Large amounts of black mist appeared, forming a gigantic black snake whose back was filled with patterns. It sucked one of the matriarchs into it.

Leylin had grown bored of remaining in this place in spite of the minimal danger and occasional respites. He wanted to end this once and

for all so he could head back and further his plans.

“Begin the counterattack!” Fendix sent out via secret imprint as he sneered.

“Retaliate! Retaliate! Retaliate!”

A sea of voices flooded out from within the city walls. The door which had been closed for a long time started to creak open. Numerous knights and magicians rushed out, heading for the dark elves’ camp.

After the previous battle and Leylin’s poison, the dark elves had suffered a devastating blow that had forced a retreat. It looked like the humans had taken hold of the advantage now.

Leylin did not pay much attention to the situation below. After some probing attacks, he had begun to lure one of the matriarchs to a suitable battlefield.

A dark elf matriarch had strength comparable to a rank 2 Magus, and Leylin could not afford to let his guard down against such a strong opponent. In addition, both the extent and range of destruction brought down by a rank 2 spell far surpassed that of one at rank 1. Thus, his opponent willingly followed him so that they could avoid unnecessary casualties.

After all, the two armies were in a melee, and any attack would definitely harm both parties. Considering their already low population, the loss would hurt the dark elves more than it hurt the humans.

In actual fact, looking at the two sides engaged in battle, the matriarch was pain-stricken by the loss.

Dark elves took 300 years just to reach adulthood. This made it much more difficult to recoup the loss of their soldiers, and every single member of their army was irreplaceable. On the other hand, humans with their high fertility and short life cycles had no such problems.

One-third of the elves on this battlefield belonged to this matriarch’s army, and among them were her own descendants.

“Here should be fine!”

Leylin brought the matriarch to a plain which was not far from Dolon City

There were a few cities near this plane, but they had all been evacuated long ago. The roads leading to the plain were already covered with weeds, and unnecessary casualties were unlikely to occur here.

“I am known as Alicia, you are worthy of knowing my name!”

This matriarch had completely calmed down, as she had to face an existence whose power rivaled her own.

Looking at this elf who was dressed in revealing leather, Leyin flashed a smile. “I am Leylin!”

Kacha!

As he said that, he suddenly shot backwards, dodging a shadow spider.

This floating shadow spider had ominous green eyes, and the mouth which had just tried to bite Leylin was now producing a crunching noise.

“Do all you matriarchs act this shamelessly?” Leylin had been stumped by her actions.

“There is no use for face when up against someone of a different race! Surrender and defect to our side; I’ll gift you with my family’s bloodline and bestow unimaginable rewards upon you!”

The matriarch licked her sexy lips and flaunted her voluptuous body, hinting at him subtly.

“Hehe... this kind of seductive energy once again!” Leylin shook his head.

A large amount of spiritual force chased the energy out.

“Scorching Touch!” He scattered a red powder just as he was chanting the spell, and red rays started ripping across the sky and immediately appeared in front of Alicia. The might of the two forces from the ray made her pale.

“Aldershkry!” Alicia started to chant and a white shield started to hover

in front of her. On the surface of the shield was the image of a spider web and flowers.

Peng! Peng!

The scorching rays attacked the shield one by one, and screeching sounded out.

Cracks started to emerge on the surface of the shield

Kacha! Under Alicia's stunned gaze, the white shield shattered to pieces and fragments flew in all directions.

"This shield was smelted from the ore of the mine guarded by the Underground Winter Spider Emperor! You shattered it!" Alicia's gaze at Leylin was now filled with dread.

"Could you consider my proposal? You can have all the females in my clan, including me..."

"Sorry! I can't see any sincerity in your words!" Silver spiritual force continuously shot out with Leylin's detached reply.

He was not a lecher, and the price of betrayal was far too steep when compared to the profits he would obtain.

Chapter 358: Defeat And Assistance

Anyone who betrayed their community for profit would immediately be labelled as unreliable. How, then, would they do well in the opposing camp?

Furthermore, Leylin was confident in the humans' ability to defend. Even if the protector of the eastern Twilight Zone were to perish, and the entirety of it fell into enemy hands, he still believed the humans in the subterranean world were not weak enough to go extinct.

As a result, matriarch Alicia's temptations did not affect Leylin in the slightest.

On the contrary, Leylin was eager to fight this rank 2 matriarch.

"Perfect. The template of a rank 2 Magus, as well as the rank 2 spell models the A.I. Chip deduced, can now be tested."

Leylin's eyes flashed, which caused Alicia who was opposite him to feel cold within her heart. She had a bad premonition.

But Leylin would not give the other party a chance, and he swiftly made the first move. "Shadow Flames!" Dark red flames poured into the sky, forming a pillar of raging fire.

[Shadow Flames: rank 2 spell. Elements: darkness, fire. Might: 120 degrees (Elemental essence conversion added)]

These were the A.I. Chip's stats on the spell which had been evolved from the Latent Fireball that he had previously made.

Over the last ten years, Leylin had obtained the spell model of a powerful rank 2 spell from Nature's Alliance. The guilds that they had consumed had also net him quite a few such models as well. Of course the Alliance, as a medium-scale guild, had possessed the most outstanding model.

Thereafter, during his stay in Dolon, he had exchanged for many more rank 2 models. By luck, he had even managed to collect two damaged rank 3 models, which he had treated like gems and diligently copied down. The

A.I. Chip had been tasked with restoring these two models.

The power of these dark red flames had clearly surpassed that of Scorching Touch from before.

Matriarch Alicia had a solemn face. Suddenly, she took out her whip and cracked it in the air.

Pa! The cracking of the whip had compressed the air, producing a sonic boom.

“Come out!” Complex black patterns emerged on Alicia’s face, covering the right side of it like a mask.

“As you wish, My Lady!” Space seemingly split apart, and a cute spider as white as jade materialised out of thin air. The blood red lines across its carapace only served to make it look cuter.

Hiss The matriarch let out a hiss, similar to the sound of a spider stridulating.

That white jade spider immediately targeted Leylin, its back shooting out large amounts of thread that emitted cold air.

The densely packed threads tangled together, forming a white cocoon that surrounded the elf and beast.

The A.I chip made his vision flash blue, and the details of the white jade spider surfaced immediately.

[Underground Frost Spider, a mutation of the Underground Winter Spider. Has an extremely strong ability to mutate!

Strength: 35; Agility: 16; Vitality: 46.9; Spiritual force : 27; Special abilities: 1; Thread defense: the Underground Frost Spider’s threads have the ability of ice, and is the bane of many rank 2 fire-type magi; Stealth: the Underground Frost Spider’s shell has abilities to reflect light, allowing it to be concealed with the surroundings.]

Leylin had never slacked off on feeding the A.I. Chip’s database with information after entering Twilight Zone. By now, a large portion of Twilight Zone’s special items were already recorded within it.

“A matriarch with an Underground Frost Spider as a familiar? One that can suppress fire elemental Magi?”

Leylin’s smiled lightly. “What a pity, my Shadow Flames are mainly composed not of fire, but of darkness!”

Along with the change in Leylin’s intent, the dark red pillar of fire immediately transformed. The red glow at its center quickly faded, being replaced instead by a dark black which took over most of the space. In a moment, the shadow forces occupied most of the pillar.

“Ingest!” Leylin grabbed at the air with both hands, and the large pillar swept Alicia’s giant white cocoon into itself.

Sssii! Large amounts of white gases appeared on the surface of the white cocoon, moving about in the air.

Hiss Leylin even heard the bloodcurdling sounds of the giant spider.

Boom! The large white cocoon suddenly exploded, smashing into the reddish-black flames.

From within the white fog, a silhouette surfaced.

The matriarch had connected her body directly on top of the Underground Frost Spider, forming a monster that was half-human and half spider. It reminded him of his subordinate, Skrill.

‘This look is very compatible with Skrill!’

Leylin laughed mockingly, but he knew that these two parties were vastly different. Skrill had used his meditation technique to alter his physical appearance, but this matriarch had fused her body with that of her pet, maybe even her soul!

Based on strength alone, Skrill could not compare to this elf who was already rank 2 and possessed many techniques that he did not.

“Disgusting, disgusting humans!” the elf that formed the upper half of this abomination hooted on the spider’s back.

Ding! Ding!

The elf held a spider leg that looked like white jade. The long spider leg instantly transformed into a white scimitar. Along the elegant curve of this scimitar were pretty patterns that glowed repeatedly. The blade emitted some white fog, which emanated cold rays.

"Kill!" The voice of the elf transformed into a wave of bright rays that enveloped her, which gradually disappeared into the air.

"Is she concealing herself now?" Leylin stroked his chin and smiled wryly.

Although dark elves were quite capable in open combat, they preferred more underhanded tactics. They would make use of their own bodies and beauty to tempt their opponents, or hide away in corners, to launch sneak attacks.

However, as a dark Magus, Leylin had come across many of these tactics, and employed them himself. He tilted his head and smiled, rooting himself to the spot and narrowing his eyes.

A few minutes later, a ray of cold white air quickly slashed across Leylin's body, but was met with the exterior of his body rippling. The body had been a mere phantom.

"You've fallen into my trap!" Leylin materialised in a corner, his body ringed by defensive darkness elemental particles.

"You are the one who fell into a trap!" Alicia laughed softly, as another body shot out explosively from the side, targeting him with his own tactic.

Boom! A large white web filled with mucus flew out and trapped Leylin. White sap fell onto him, and the sounds of corrosion rang out as it continuously seeped into his body.

"So that previous attack was fake!"

Leylin smiled gently, but his expression did not show any dejection, as if the person trapped was not him.

With a flash of white light, Alicia appeared in front of Leylin. Currently, she looked apathetic. She held a white scimitar and was about to directly

chop off Leylin's head.

However, Leylin's demeanor made her feel uneasy.

Boom! As Leylin's head flew upwards, a strange transformation occurred in mid-air.

The head dissipated into a large number of black shadows, condensing many darkness elemental particles to form a cage that bound the matriarch.

"Rank 2 spell, Illusory Body: Second Stage!"

The surrounding space flashed as Leylin removed the darkness elemental waves concealing his body, appearing in front of Alicia.

Closer inspection revealed the sensuality of this matriarch's body; the temptation it induced was shocking.

However, Leylin's expression was as cold as ice. A black spear ringed with red flames instantly appeared in his hand.

"Rank 2 spell: Lance of corrosion!"

"Go die!" Leylin said beneath his breath, the black spear in his hand being launched forward.

The space warped where the spear passed, and a strong corrosive force continuously condensed onto its tip.

"Explode!!!" Upon seeing the terrible force the spear contained, as if able to destroy the very earth, Alicia's face changed instantly. She resolutely chanted a few spells under her breath.

Suddenly, the Underground Frost Spider screeched irritably, the blood lines on its body enlarging and dying almost its entire body red. Moreover, weirdly, its body swelled up.

A ray of white light swiftly separated Alicia and the white spider.

Boom!

The spear exploded intensely at Alicia's original location.

The black chains instantly exploded, which caused the exploded flesh

and blood to strike the black spear.

Two large energy forces melded and grew denser, causing large distortions to the void.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

When the distortions had condensed to a point, it ended off with a violent explosion.

Even though the forces collided in mid-air, the remains of the energy waves they generated headed towards the ground, blasting off layers of stone and soil. The waves swept the area, causing large-scale destruction.

Alicia's silhouette flew out of the explosion. However, things did not seem to look good for her, her lower body dripping with fresh blood. Being caught right in the middle of the explosion, she'd naturally received the brunt of the force it generated.

However, she currently did not have time to care about her injuries. Looking over herself restrainedly, she turned into a ray of blood that disappeared into the horizon.

Leylin stood where he was silently, and did not give chase.

To him, helping the humans retain their lands was just a passing favour. He did not want to kill a rank 2 existence of the opposing party, as he did not desire an animosity that could not be resolved.

Of course, some preparations had to be made to expedite the end of the war.

Leylin smiled wryly. Having roughly figured out his next course of action, he rushed towards the other two groups.

Fendix's opponent was the matriarch who wore the two rings on her bosom. This opponent's strength was tyrannical, and she had suppressed Fendix and limited his movements. Fendix ended up constantly on the defensive, which embittered him.

Chapter 359: Death And Insanity

“Hm?” At this moment, Fendix and the dark elven matriarch looked toward the side.

“Fendix, I’m here to help!” Leylin closed in rapidly, his clothes rustling in the strong wind.

“Umbra’s Hand!”

Large numbers of shadows emerged from behind him, and transformed into what looked like a giant hand which obstructed the matriarch.

“What’s your situation? How much magic power do you have left?” Leylin glanced at Fendix, who was already slightly pale.

“Half, and I can release one more formidable spell. How about you?” Upon seeing Leylin’s arrival, Fendix heaved a huge sigh of relief.

“I’ve already sent that matriarch away. All that’s left is her,” Leylin pointed at the matriarch across them, “I remember you still have a powerful offensive spell—Violent Thunder Chains, right? I’ll keep her occupied. Quick, go and prepare it!”

“Alright!” Fendix gritted his teeth.

Though he had seen through Leylin’s intentions, this matriarch was his arch-enemy! In the past, Duke Fendix, the army’s commander and a member of his family, had been killed by this person’s army. He could not wait to end her!

Besides, they were at war. Killing a matriarch would reward him with an enormous number of merit points!

Leylin watched the matriarch, a slight smile creeping onto his face...

Minutes later, Fendix roared. A dazzling blue light filled the region, and snakes of electricity began dancing in the air, trapping the opponent within.

Innumerable streaks of lightning fell, and a few minutes later all that was left of the matriarch was ash and charcoal falling from the air.

“The dark elves are withdrawing!” Just as Leylin and Fendix had taken care of the situation here, the other rank 2 Magus hurried to them, “The matriarch who was fighting me seemed to have received some news, and suddenly escaped. I couldn’t catch up to her at all... Ah! You! You killed her...”

The female Magus clapped her hand on her mouth, unable to express her astonishment with words.

.....

The dark elves that surrounded Dolon City retreated quickly. The three thousand Underground Winter Spider knights that had attacked were a very large power in the eastern region. Many of them had temporarily been transferred over from the other two armies.

Now, with Leylin’s poison facilitating a counterattack, a good number of them had been lost. The siege of Dolon had ended, and their victory even led to a chain effect.

What’s more, the death of a rank 2 matriarch had caused Dolon City to become the heart of the battle.

However, Fendix and Leylin did not choose to rest. Instead, riding on this momentum, they led troops in to save the other two large cities.

After their formidable forces had been weakened considerably, the dark elves were pushed back step by step, and were finally chased out of the east. This gave the human race a ray of hope.

As for the merit points from killing the matriarch? Since Leylin was intentionally keeping a low-profile, all of them ended up in Fendix’s hands.

He cared little for reputation, and this seemed to be very important to Fendix, as if there was a grudge involved. Hence, he was happy to do him a favour. After all, Fendix had helped him quite a bit previously, and had also promised to make it up to him in the future.

.....

“We won in the east? That’s great!” Aaron, who was currently in another city, heard the news.

Shockingly, he was dressed in a gray, tattered cloak, and soot covered his entire face. The ring in his hand concealed his energy fluctuations.

The whole city was now caught up in a wave of joy.

Whether it was nobles, commoners or knights, they darted to the streets the moment they received the news, exhibiting their ecstasy with no inhibitions.

The threat of the dark elves had loomed over this area for far too long. Hopes had plummeted further when the north was broken through, and the news of whole cities being slaughtered had terrified everyone. The people needed some good news to raise their spirits.

The city master’s residence had been opened to the public, and he’d even ordered chefs to serve great amounts of oatmeal bread and fruit juice to the public.

“This may be good news, but it’s much too distant from you right now.” A white ray of light shot out from the black ring, projecting the image of a wise old man in Aaron’s mind. “Leave the moment you get it! The Mambo Family that governs this city is not something you can take on easily!”

“I know!” Aaron nodded seriously, and disappeared into the crowd.

Gu! Minutes after he left, a small squadron surrounded the area, red flames burning. Among them was the figure of a woman in a pink gown.

“He was here not long ago. Seal the city! We can’t let him escape!” the woman exclaimed grimly, and the soldiers immediately dispersed. Soon, the shrill sound of bugles resounded throughout the city.

“You actually dared to steal my family’s most valuable treasure! You will pay for this in flesh and blood!!” The woman glanced at the area once again, and issued this frightful vow before travelling through the flames.

Rumble! A tongue of flame swept up to a height of five to six metres, and the figure of the woman completely vanished.

Hah...

After a few close shaves, Aaron stealthily left the city and reached a hideout he had previously prepared.

This was an underground karst cave. After doing away with all traces of the entrance and activating a defensive spell formation, Aaron finally heaved a sigh of relief and sat on the ground.

“That was too dangerous! It was only one item, did they have to chase after me so fervently?” Aaron complained, and then glared at Merlin in his mind. “Let me make this clear. If it will still be this dangerous to gather materials for the Meteor Sword in the future, I might have to give up on it. The sword may be a precious high-grade artifact, but it isn’t as precious as my life.”

“Hehe, don’t worry. This Teardrop Gemstone was the most difficult material to obtain. As long as you have your predictions, the rest are relatively easier to get our hands on.”

Immediately after, the old geezer looked stern. “The Teardrop Gemstone is a precious treasure of the Mambo Family, and it’s only natural that it was guarded so tightly. The weakening curses cast on your body are a pain, and I’ll need to spend some time analysing them. For these next two months, your strength will be restricted to that of an acolyte.”

“Sigh... But it can’t be helped!” Aaron sighed, and then thought back to the female Magus in the pink gown, his facial muscles twitching.

“I’m still far too weak. Grandpa Merlin, is there any method to advance in Sacred Flame quickly?”

“Of course!” Merlin stroked his white beard.

“Although most high-grade meditation techniques become harder to train in the further you train in them, and require many otherworldly materials to allow one to advance, my Sacred Flame is different!”

Merlin’s voice carried a hint of pride as he delved into his memories.

“Not only does my Sacred Flame give you the power to see the future, it

can also allow you to advance quickly through the convergence of destiny's powers. In theory, as long as you interfere with destiny as much as possible, you can advance at a terrifying rate!"

"Hss..." Aaron breathed in sharply, "So if I cause havoc in Twilight Zone, doesn't that mean I can rush to becoming a Morning Star Magus?"

"Dream on!" Merlin was ruthless as he glanced at Aaron disdainfully. "How strong is the power of destiny? Just prodding the river of destiny could cause you to be ground into powder by the inertia of fate. I trained in Sacred Flame for hundreds of years and still only dared follow in Destiny's footsteps, merely speeding up the process."

"No matter what it is, this can help me increase my strength! I'll do it!" Aaron suddenly clenched his fist.

He had returned to his guild an official Magus. He had also made them pay, to a certain extent, but the result was far from what he had imagined.

That young noble who had stolen his fiancée still had a Magus family backing him, with an official Magus in charge. Aaron could do little more than accept his apology for stealing his bride.

After this experience, his thirst for power had become more intense. This was why he was in a hurry to wander around, as well as gather materials to forge the Meteor Sword.

"So where is the area where destiny converges?" Aaron looked at Grandpa Merlin, eyes full of hope.

"You'll need to find out yourself!" Merlin seemed to be implying something.

"En! I have to use Sacred Flame!" Aaron's eyes brightened.

"That's right! You've been promoted to an official Magus, and can therefore take a peek at the real long river of destiny!" Merlin gave an amiable smile.

"I'll take a look now!"

Aaron impatiently sat down and entered a meditative state.

A unique spiritual force emanated from his body, linking with passage of time in the underworld and the rivers of history.

“Hm?” Aaron suddenly moved, holding onto his head and crying out miserably.

Scattered images, containing the bloodlust and vengeance of spirits flooded his mind.

—In the central region of Twilight Zone, a young Magus in black robes was currently speaking in a basement to an audience of malnourished and sickly teenagers. These teenagers, however, had extremely bright eyes that were almost blazing. Behind the Magus, the twisted image of a spider seemed to appear—

—The Dark Elven Empire! A teenager riding on a large Underground Winter Spider cheered excitedly, with a dark elf smiling wryly beside him—

These and a few other sporadic fragments appeared in Aaron’s mind, making him feel like a brick had been stuffed into it.

About half an hour later, Aaron reawakened, but he was breathing roughly.

“Those two people must be the ones around which the powers of destiny converge!” He sounded resolute.

“As long as I’m by their side and gain their trust, I can affect the children of destiny and accelerate the progress of Sacred Flame!

“When the time comes, you will all die! Haha...”

Aaron began to laugh madly, a faint trace of insanity in his expression.

Chapter 360: Invitation From The Central Region

The war had ended. Leylin, who had returned from the battlefield, was now leisurely drinking some coffee.

With a thought, he accepted the scenes that the A.I. Chip transmitted to him.

“Baelin truly is Twilight Zone’s child of destiny, but Longbottom is really surprising me...” Leylin stroked his chin, watching Longbottom who was currently spouting resentment.

“Using a revolution to cobble together an army, gathering wandering Magi who are unsatisfied with the rule of the guilds, and passing high-grade meditation techniques to common acolytes? Ingenious!” Even he had to appreciate Longbottom’s methods.

The Magus World had never been a fair place, but the immense strength of Magi had meant that nobody could overthrow them.

To cause trouble in the Magus World, it was necessary to incite disharmony within their ranks. It looked like Longbottom was doing well. He was even bringing about a revolution!

“Perhaps this happened in the south coast’s past as well, causing the power of guilds to wane and letting academies take their place...” Leylin made a sudden association.

However, the first of the revolutionaries would not be able to find peace, as the conservative factions would attack them, giving them a horrible death.

This was why Leylin had no intention of introducing the system of academies to Twilight Zone and had instead kept a low profile and assimilated into their culture.

“It looks like Baelin and Longbottom are like two sides of a coin. Both are the children of destiny for this era! However, one is a hero, while the

other is a rebel.” Leylin picked up the cup of coffee on the table and took a sip.

Sometimes, rebels were merely heroes who failed in their conquests! If Longbottom’s revolutionary efforts succeeded, then he would be immortalised as a model in the Magus World, extensively praised and recorded down in Magus history.

If, instead, Longbottom was bested by Baelin, he would go down in the books as a rebel; a traitor who had betrayed mankind, forever shamed by history.

“The final decisive battle will definitely be between these two! Before that, the force of destiny will quickly increase their power, even if it might not be beneficial to them in the long run.”

Leylin was very clear about the path a child of destiny could take.

While they were making their mark on the world, they could obtain an inheritance just by wandering around. By going into a random danger zone, there could be a grandpa giving out techniques, allowing them to advance quickly, and thereby causing many geniuses to be so ashamed of themselves that they committed suicide!

“Longbottom seems to have gained a bloodline, and Baelin is even better off. Not only has he even found the path to becoming a Bio Booster, which suits him best, he has even subdued the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, which is a creature with a might similar to a rank 2 Magus!”

Leylin, who had seen much in the world, could naturally judge their general strength through these scenes. The unexpected luck they had caused even Leylin to envy them.

At the same time, he had been frightened slightly. “If I had continued with him, wouldn’t I have been played by destiny and become the grandpa handing out techniques?”

Leylin looked grim. Baelin had actually gotten some benefits from him. Although he had been affected by his emotional instability as a warlock, one could not deny the hand of destiny in this matter.

After all, destiny was not created out of anywhere. It needed a form of catalyst, which would infinitely increase the probability of it appearing.

For instance, Leylin could have chosen to craft potions instead of taking in a disciple to while time away, but he had instead chosen to teach Baelin the ways of knights.

Out of everyone in Potter Town, he had settled on Baelin. How much probability and luck was involved?

“Since you want to play, let’s have a good time!” Leylin raised his cup and sent a challenge out to the skies.

[Beep! Based on scans by the limited AI, slight instability has been detected in target Aaron. The target seems to be in the early stages of mental breakdown. Immediate adoption of countermeasures suggested.]

At this moment, the A.I. Chip prompted, and an image of Aaron going crazy was projected in front of Leylin’s eyes.

“Looks like things are getting quite troublesome! Although the effects when training as an acolyte were removed in this new version of Scarlet Flame, the effects don’t seem sustainable for those who advance to become Magi.”

Leylin’s expression darkened. This was why he had not trained in Sacred Flame. Not only did he already have Kemoyin’s Pupil, he feared the side-effects brought about by training in the technique.

The spirit had far too many secrets. Even with the unworldly calculative ability of the A.I. Chip, it was still not able to analyse the mysteries of the spirit.

“A.I. Chip! Gather stats from Aaron’s current condition, and modify Sacred Flame again. Also, check on the other guinea pigs!” Leylin commanded.

Immediately after, the images of two other people were projected before Leylin.

He had not limited himself to forging the ring. His counterfeit grandpas

had been passed on in secret during these past ten years, disguised by various methods as a 'coincidence' each time.

The A.I. Chip's scenes showed him a young female acolyte and a strong man who also trained in Sacred Flame, cold sweat rolling down their faces.

"The power of destiny!"

All of a sudden, the two of them opened their eyes and looked at the central region.

"Everything starts and end at the same place! There's them as well..."

The two of them made the same prediction, fear flashing on their faces.

Through the interception of this information, Leylin naturally knew what they were afraid of.

"Hehe... have they sensed the others training in the technique? It seems Sacred Flame still can't be practiced by more than one person."

The high-grade meditation technique, Sacred Flame, had come from the Botelli Family. Traditionally, only one person in a generation could successfully train in this meditation technique, while the rest would suffer a mental breakdown and die.

However, with modifications from the A.I. Chip, as well as Leylin's lack of concern, this meditation technique had been passed down to many acolytes, and they had all risen to become official Magi through Sacred Flame!

[Due to the unusual nature of this meditation technique, they will need to kill each other to determine a victor. Only then will Sacred Flame be complete.]

Leylin smirked at the A.I. Chip's newest conclusion.

"This Sacred Flame really is a fraud!"

His thoughts were now very clear. He would definitely not train in such a bizarre meditation technique.

How to take advantage of their prophetic powers and set up the

situation was worth looking into, as well as the question of who would win the fight.

Leylin touched his chin, deep in thought.

.....

Five days later, an unexpected guest paid a visit to Leylin's villa.

Clang! Four giant metallic legs charged straight through and finally stopped by Leylin's garden, setting off a cloud of dust and creating a ruckus behind them.

"My apologies, Magus Leylin! This large guy hasn't been easy to control. It might be because it's in its mating season..." Logan jumped off the back of his metallic lifeform, looking apologetic.

"No worries Magus Logan," Leylin smiled. Shaking his head to show he did not mind, he gestured to invite the Magus in, continuing, "Please come in. I've collected some items which may interest you."

A bit later, Celine who'd rushed over for some business saw the protector of the east, Logan, sitting on a chair and singing praises of the giant grilled fish on the long table.

"What type of fish is this? I've never seen it before."

"It's a hybrid of the Mamhar Fish and the Barracuda. I bred it myself!" Leylin laughed.

This creature was an accidental product of a bloodline experiment. Unexpectedly, it had ended up tasting quite good, which prompted Leylin to serve it to guests.

As the flesh of this fish was extremely delicious, and also had the function of strengthening the body of a rank 2 Magus, it was very popular.

After finding this out, Leylin immediately ordered Celine to open up a massive aquafarm, preparing to breed this type of fish at a large scale. It would be another addition to his profits.

While learning under the light Magi of the south coast, Leylin had taken care of numerous secret planes and had learned that something like that

had a lot of significance and value.

As a bonus. Celine had been extremely agreeable to him recently at night, her eyes so bright it seemed like she could blink out liquid.

Leylin's conjecture was that she had thought he had been diligently managing the guild, which touched her.

Leylin had merely laughed off her misunderstanding, not bothering to explain and instead enjoying his luck with her.

After enjoying the fine liquor and good food together, Leylin finally cut to the chase. "I wonder what I can do for Protector Logan, that you've come all the way here?"

"I came here today because I have a presumptuous request of you." Logan looked serious, and slightly embarrassed.

"What is it?" Leylin seemed calm, while Celine who was beside him grasped his fingers.

"On behalf of the central region's guilds' alliance, I invite Nature's Alliance to move to the central region! We have prepared the resources afforded to a large-scale guild for you, and there is a seat for Nature's Alliance waiting amongst our ranks. In other words, once you go there, Nature's Alliance will become a large-scale guild!"

Logan went straight to the point, saying everything in one breath.

The moment the words left his mouth, Leylin could feel Celine's breath becoming more hurried.

Large-scale guild! That was the ultimate dream of all guilds in Twilight Zone! As the heart of Twilight Zone, the central region was also where the population was the densest, and represented the essence of the subterranean humans.

Most guilds could only wish to expand there.

Celine had always been striving for Nature's Alliance to rise through the ranks, and she did not seem to find this situation to be strange as all. Meanwhile, Leylin was thinking of something else.

“Has the situation in the central region become that bad?” He suddenly asked.

“Hm?” Logan’s expression froze.

Moments later, he laughed wryly.

Chapter 361: Movement

“I really can’t hide anything from you!” Logan laughed bitterly. “As you know, the situation in the central region is not favourable. The dark elves are a part of it, but the Protector of Twilight Zone is the more pressing issue...”

Leylin roughly understood the situation. Powerful rank 2 Magi normally overtook the duties of protecting the north, south, east, and west of the Twilight Zone, but central Twilight Zone was different.

That area housed the elite forces of Twilight zone, so the overseeing Magus was titled the “Guardian of the Realm”. The current generation’s Guardian possessed the strength of a rank 3 Magus.

But intelligence reports said that the lifespan of the Guardian was nearing its end; he hadn’t even appeared in public in the last few decades. His seclusion was so foreboding that it was probably the main reason for the dark elves, dwarfs and gnomes to gang up on them.

“You...” Celine clenched her fists tightly, her face turning red from anger, she had finally realized the meaning of the invitation. If it was during peacetime, and one was allowed to enter the central region and become a large-scale guild, that was a truly fortunate event. But now?

The dark elven army had just been routed in the east, giving them some room to breathe. On the other hand, with the fall of Potti City, the center was facing a surge of dark elves and other enemies from the north. This meant the situation in the center was currently much worse than in the east.

At such a time, what sort of invitation was this? Wasn’t this just a request for troops and cannon fodder?

Celine almost cursed before she realised that the person sitting across her was the rank 2 Protector of the East. She suppressed her rage by force of will, leading to nothing but a smudge in her expression.

Leylin remained silent for a while. He finally let out a bitter smile. “The

central region was originally protected on all four sides. It was extremely stable and peaceful, and was the best choice for accommodation. But currently, it's being eyed by our enemies. Logan, do you really want me to suffer?"

"I understand your problem! But..." Logan said hesitantly, "Firstly, I can tell you, this is an order of the Guardian of the Realm. We are to summon forth assistance from all four regions. Additionally, regardless of the other large-scale guilds' intentions, I can guarantee that my own guild will step forward and enter the central region!"

Logan stood up and vowed solemnly to Leylin, even bending his head all the way to his knees.

"Sir Leylin! For Twilight Zone, and for the entire human race, I hope you can help us!"

In that moment, Leylin felt like Logan's body was glowing. That expression greatly moved Celine who was at his side.

"Hu..." Leylin locked his brows, and seemed to be deep in thought. Logan and Celine, on the other hand, were afraid to even breathe too loudly for fear of interrupting Leylin's ruminations.

"I'll help you..."

After a few moments, Leylin produced an answer, bringing a sudden streak of joy across Logan's face and causing Celine to worry. She wanted to speak out, but was abruptly thwarted by Leylin continuing, "but I have a few conditions!"

"Speak!" Logan's voice could not conceal his excitement.

Leylin raised his index finger. "Firstly, The resources and seat you promised previously must be handed over to us unconditionally!"

"Of course; you're entitled to the resources and treatment given to a large-scale guild. If that bunch of brats dare to embezzle anything, I will kill them immediately!" Logan's tone was merciless, but during war the protector did indeed have the authority to do such a thing.

“Great!” he raised another finger, “In addition, I need to keep my land and position in the east!”

“Want to leave an escape route? Sure! I can promise you that! Anything for mankind!” Logan considered the condition for only a few moments before he agreed in delight.

“Anything for mankind!” Leylin chuckled to himself. He had always known that the central region would be where everything would come to a head, and his plans also required that he go there. Hence, he had already considered going to the central region.

Keeping a hold of their land here was obviously for him to retain the icy cave. There would have been no further negotiations if this point had been rejected. Leylin would rather secede from Twilight Zone than share the icy cave with anyone.

Now, he didn’t mind putting on a little show.

Logan was truly touched. Many large guilds that he had visited previously had refused to help. After all, Magi were all rational beings, and they too had to think of their subordinates. The central region was now full of danger; how then was it more alluring than the east?

“Ley... .. Sir Leylin, Twilight Zone will forever remember your contribution!”

Logan appeared very reassured, as he entered his metallic lifeform and hurriedly left. It seemed like he still had many guilds to visit.

“Sir! Why did you...” Immediately after Logan left, Celine asked with urgency.

“I have already decided. You can stay behind and guard this place if you wish. In any case, we will retain our land in the east. Going to the center is merely a gamble. It doesn’t matter if we fail, and if we do manage to succeed, Nature’s Alliance will become one of the central region’s large-scale guilds! Isn’t that what you’ve always been dreaming of?” Leylin smiled at Celine, placid.

“But... what about your safety?” Celine knew that the rise of Nature’s

Alliance was founded completely on the formidable strength of the man before her. Were they to lose him, the consequences would be unimaginable.

“You do not need to worry about my safety, for I will not put myself in a deadly situation. Furthermore, do you not trust my abilities?” Leylin persuaded her calmly.

Celine nodded and her heart calmed. As the person who came into contact with Leylin the most and the one closest to him, she deeply believed in the man’s unfathomable abilities.

Sometimes, the display of just a fraction of his power could scare her breathless.

“Okay! Pass the orders. A new batch of Magi and acolytes are to be chosen, we set off in ten days!” Leylin commanded.

“Yes!” Celine saluted withdrew herself with a bow. Nature’s Alliance was currently under Leylin’s sole command, and nobody in the guild could disobey him. Although there were some small troubles initially, Leylin’s absolute authority ensured the orders for the mobilization of their forces were sent out methodically.

Although many acolytes feared the disorder in the central region, they also craved adventure. Despite the danger, there were also many magicians there who had gained rewards aplenty.

As for the higher ups? Their fates were in Leylin’s hand, so what choice would they have?

After ten days, an enormous squadron had been formed, and began advancing towards the central region

Meanwhile, at the entrance of the canyon of Nature’s Alliance, Celine was clad in a purple gown. She observed the squadron proceed slowly until they disappeared along the horizon.

Due to some considerations Leylin had, he wanted Celine to remain here.

“You must definitely return alive!” She prayed as she returned to Nature’s Alliance.

“Guild master!” Several official Magi and acolytes hastily greeted her. They knew of Leylin’s and Celine’s relationship, and the fact that both of them were the nominal masters of the guild, so they did not dare to be negligent

Upon witnessing this scene, Celine felt some emptiness in her heart, but shortly after, another unfamiliar feeling arose.

“You may rise! The dark elves in the eastern region have already retreated, leaving behind many resources for us to conquer. This is our chance!” Celine’s voice was cold yet noble, and no one dared to look straight at her.

“Things will only be interesting when some leeway is given to these sorts of women”

Meanwhile, on a luxurious vehicle pulled by a giant salamander, Leylin stroked his chin and he broke into a demonic chuckle.

A woman like Celine could only bloom completely if authority was given to her. Hence, Leylin had intentionally given her position and power in the guild. He was sure that, in their next meeting, she would definitely not disappoint him.

Furthermore, his goals during this journey to the center were too large for Celine’s strength to be of assistance to him. He was also not in the mood to get intimate with her, so he had left her behind.

“The central region!” Leylin quietly went over the intelligence he had gathered regarding the central region.

It was the core of the entire Twilight Zone with a very high population density. The strength of its large-scale guilds largely surpassed that of guilds in the other regions. Yet, this was not the most horrifying fact...

“The Guardian of the Realm... ..” Leylin let out a sigh.

The position of the Guardian was normally given to the most powerful

Magus in the entirety of Twilight Zone.

But the Protector of the East, Logan, had met him several times and their abilities should be on par. Hence, the Guardian of the Realm should be a powerhouse even amongst rank 3 Magi. If not for his lifespan that was almost depleted, Leylin would not dare to play such tricks.

The squadron proceeded gradually, and the roaming darkness creatures and bandits on their path fled in all directions the moment they spotted them. They did not dare to obstruct Leylin's party and offend them.

The bandits were observant and naturally realised that this squadron was composed of Magi. As for the darkness creatures, they could sense the strong aura travelling towards them and escaped for fear of death.

Thus, the journey was rather a peaceful one.

Along the way, Nature's Alliance had amassed a following of several other medium-scale guilds as well as a few small-scale guilds. They, too, had heeded the call and wanted to go to the central region to keep watch.

Upon witnessing Nature Alliance's standard, the guild masters of different guilds immediately came forth to visit him, and even let go of their pride to discuss the possibility of joining forces to advance.

After all, the fact that Leylin was a member of Nature's Alliance was made known to many. That was a rank 2 Magus! With him there, the procession would definitely make it to the central region without any hiccups.

"Although there are a few idealists in there, most of them are those with great ambitions who are willing to take a gamble!"

After a look, Leylin evaluated these people indifferently.

However, he still agreed to their requests. The horse carriages, which formed a large procession resembling a river, began to travel towards the central region.

As Magi could illuminate the path ahead with spells, there was no need for the carriages to carry torches.

The giant sunstone was placed on the top of a carriage, illuminating the surroundings and their path brightly.

Chapter 362: A Fair Trial

Rumble!

Faint fluctuations travelled over, and for there to be so many undulations despite the long distance allowed the people in the carriage to ascertain their identities.

“They’re Magi, official Magi! It looks like they’re battling. Do we still proceed?” A peak rank 1 Magus guild master approached Leylin’s carriage and bowed, asking for further instructions.

“Of course!” Leylin spoke indifferently. With the power, they held when they banded together, they could easily go on a rampage in the eastern region. Thus, they were fearless.

The guild leader seemed to have the same thoughts and, after a moment of pause, they continued to advance.

The rest of the party noticed the energy fluctuations as they closed in. One of the two seemed to have reservations with approaching them, while the other hesitated for a moment before heading in their directions.

“Trying to use us to block the enemy?” The Magi in the group of carriages silently waited while smirking.

Xiu!

Seconds later, a red streak shot over from afar, and a young Magus appeared.

This Magus looked quite ordinary but for the black ring on his right index finger and his resolute eyes. After seeing so many official Magi, his eyes widened and he tried to take a long way around them.

“You can’t escape! How dare you steal our family’s treasure!” a woman’s voice sounded out. The young man quivered, bit his lips, ground his teeth, and then dashed towards the group of carriages.

“Save me! I’m a wandering Magus, and for some reason, this mad woman is chasing me. She keeps slandering me and saying that I stole her

treasure!”

This young Magus was naturally Aaron. After recuperating from his injuries, he had been unlucky enough to meet with the Magus from the Mambo Family, and had been chased all the way here.

As for blocking this group’s path, that was naturally Merlin’s idea.

“Will they save me? After all...” Aaron worriedly communicated with Merlin in his mind.

“Don’t worry! I’ve already completely concealed the aura of the Teardrop Gemstone. That crazy woman behind us won’t find anything!” Merlin promised confidently.

As for that confidence, it was definitely due to a certain someone within the carriages.

“Hehe... Young man, you’re pretty good to have actually helped me gather the Teardrop Gemstone. I didn’t even know the Mambo Family had this in their collection!” Leylin smiled lightly, a cold glint in his eyes.

Xiu! At this moment, a pink ray shot into this area, and the female Magus who had been chasing after Aaron appeared in their midst.

After seeing the group of carriages with so many Magi, she felt her chest tighten perceptibly.

“I am Ophelia of the Mambo Family! My apologies if I am offending you, but please do not stop me from pursuing this vile thief!”

The group was arranged haphazardly, with a few small scale guilds in front. Ophelia’s tone was therefore not that polite.

After all, the Mambo Family was quite famous in this region.

“How dare you! Who do you think you are?”

“The Mambo Family? Never heard of it before.”

Although those in front were a just few small scale guilds, their higher-ups were watching on from the back, and even the legendary rank 2 Magus in charge of Nature’s Alliance was present. They were naturally

unrestrained in their answers.

“You...” Ophelia’s voice lowered, and a faint aura of danger emanated from her body.

How many people in her family dared to speak to her like this?

At this point, however, more carriages had arrived, and the markings caused Ophelia to swallow the words she was planning to say, making her dumbstruck.

“The Lost Clock, Twisted Black Clouds, Infernal Blood, and... Nature’s Alliance!”

Ophelia’s eyes widened. These were all medium scale guilds, and each one of them was powerful enough to pressure the Mambo Family—especially Nature’s Alliance, which had a powerful rank 2 Magus in charge.

The moment they were provoked, they would squash her like one would an ant.

On the other end, Aaron gaped, stunned. “So many! So many Magi and acolytes! Are they migrating?”

“Ophelia had no intentions of offending anyone; please forgive me!” Cold sweat rushed down Ophelia’s spine, and she immediately dropped to the ground and bowed.

“Haven’t you dealt with this yet?” At this moment, Leylin opened the door and descended from the largest and most luxurious carriage in Nature’s Alliance’s group.

“Lord Leylin!” All the Magi there immediately bowed.

“Ley-Leylin! The legendary rank 2 Magus said to have heavily injured a dark elven Sovereign Mother! Why is my luck so bad?” Ophelia was snarling on the inside, but she wouldn’t dare to even break into a cold sweat in this man’s presence.

“What’s going on?” Leylin furrowed his eyebrows, asking even though he knew the situation.

“My-My apologies, my lord!” A Magus from the Alliance was frightened so badly he couldn’t even speak clearly.

“What’s going on?” Leylin repeated once again, but the atmosphere had frozen. The entire group was quiet, and even some guild leaders of medium-scaled guilds, who were peak rank 1 Magi themselves, did not dare to make a sound.

“My lord, it’s like this....” Ophelia tried her best to make herself sound calm, narrating the whole story.

“Oh! Is that so?”

Leylin turned, and Aaron was pressed to the ground by an invisible force.

“I’ll give you one chance. You said you used your family’s secret method and found him. Do it again in front of us! If the Teardrop Gemstone is on him, then he shall be judged by us all. If not...” Leylin’s dangerous gaze landed on Ophelia, causing her head to tingle.

“If it isn’t, then Ophelia is willing to accept punishment!” Ophelia grit her teeth and forced out an answer.

“Not only that, those of us here are responding to summons from the central region to engage in battle. If you are proven to be wrong, you shall be prosecuted by the war council for obstructing military affairs.”

Leylin smiled to make up for his harsh words. “Well then, begin!”

“What do I do? What do I do?” Aaron watched Ophelia who had already begun to use her family’s secret method and the official Magi who were preparing to watch a good show. He repeatedly asked Merlin in his mind, while not even daring to look at the legendary rank 2 Magus at all.

“Don’t worry. I’m the legendary great Magus Merlin. What is a little rank 2 Magus to me?” Merlin boasted shamelessly, “With my spirit force concealing it, this girl definitely won’t find anything!”

“Then why didn’t you use it previously?” Aaron felt like he had been conned.

“A lot of my spirit force has been used, and it hasn’t been replenished,”

Merlin explained vaguely, causing Aaron to immediately begin reproaching himself. How could he not trust Grandpa Merlin, whom he had grown up with?

“You’re dead meat!” Ophelia snickered while lowering her head, pointing at Aaron with the ring.

“There is a tracking spell formation on the Teardrop Gemstone passed down by my ancestors. As long he has it on him, my ring will emit red rays of light. Look, my lords!”

Ophelia pointed the ring at Aaron, and shouted a word, “Mambo!”

Aaron’s heart was at his throat, and he almost closed his eyes to wait for the judgment of destiny.

“Eh?” “Oh!” “Ah?”

All sorts of sounds resounded by Aaron’s ears, but none of them were the accusations he had expected.

He secretly chanced a glance at Ophelia, who was now looking lost and dejected.

“How is this possible? How is this possible? It wasn’t like this the last few times!” She lifted the ring and scanned him a few more times.

The ring had no response, as if it were just an ordinary ring.

“Haha! How is it? Aren’t my concealing methods powerful?” Merlin chuckled heartily in Aaron’s mind.

In reality, all of this was Leylin’s work. If not for him being there, Aaron would definitely have been seen through.

“How?” Ophelia shrieked, unwilling to give up as she took off the ring and inspected the formations within.

Moments later, she yelled out, “It must be you! You must have hidden the Teardrop Gemstone somewhere along the way!”

“No! It must definitely be on your person. Hand it over!” Blazing pink flames appeared on her body.

“Enough! What a farce!” Leylin was still playing the role of a fair, altruistic judge.

“No! My lord, you need to believe me!” Ophelia’s voice cracked, sounding a little hoarse.

Bang!

A resplendent, silver light flashed, and the flames on her body were extinguished. She retreated a few steps and fell to the ground, her expression still full of stubbornness.

“Haha, that girl actually dares to resist. She’s in trouble!” Merlin rejoiced in Aaron’s mind.

“What’s happening?” Aaron immediately asked.

“That Lord Leylin is a rank 2 Magus! His solidified spiritual force is not something a little girl like her can withstand, but she actually dared do so. What should have been a light injury will now become more serious, and might even affect her sea of consciousness...”

“Ah? Then what’s going to happen to her?” Aaron began to blame himself.

“What else can happen to her? If a rank 2 Magus wants to discipline her, she’ll still need to endure it even if she’s not in the wrong. She can’t complain either,” Merlin continued taking joy in her pain, and took the opportunity to educate Aaron, “This is the law of the Magus World!”

“Leave this place and never appear in front of me again! It seems like you just made a mistake this time. I won’t report it to the war council!”

Leylin hummed lightly and returned to the carriage.

“Thank you for your mercy, my lord!” His actions elicited words of gratitude from the female Magus.

Ophelia left the area in a daze. Although she was in despair, were she to continue staying here, a few peak rank 1 Magi would make short work of her without Leylin even lifting a finger.

“What are you looking at? We’re leaving!”

Soon enough, the carriages continued their journey.

Chapter 363: Infiltration Into The Central Region

Aaron stood in a spot alone, and no Magi bothered him.

This was his second time experiencing a feeling of loss. The first time? Naturally, it was when his spiritual aptitude had deteriorated, and his engagement was broken off.

Aaron held onto the black ring in his hands tightly. That was the gloomiest moment of his life, but thankfully he found this!

“Grandpa Merlin? When do you reckon I will reach the level of Master Leylin?” Aaron silently asked in his heart.

It had never occurred to him to use his connections. In Dolon City, he was but a small acolyte, whereas Leylin was a powerful rank 2 Magus. The latter would surely not remember him!

“Relax, isn’t it just rank 2?” Merlin had inherited Leylin’s twisted sense of humour. It whispered into Aaron’s mind: “As long as you can find the two children of destiny, and trigger the river of destiny, your cultivation in Sacred Flame will increase exponentially. Advancing to rank 2 or 3 will be a simple task!”

“In that case, I have to increase my speed!” Aaron clenched his fist and looked into the far distance; for an instant he was filled with hope.

To Leylin, what happened to Aaron was but a hiccup in his journey.

Even though Aaron was a chess piece of his, he never requested Aaron to join him. After all, keeping Merlin at his side was enough.

Moreover, he did not want to give Aaron or the others any clues, lest they discover his intentions.

Leylin lowered his head, concealing the bottomless glow in his eyes.

.....

After advancing for half a month, the squadron had entered the central

region.

Their journey there had been very peaceful, with nothing happening.

Their squadron was one that was composed of magicians. They had no lack of even peak rank 1 Magi, and Leylin, a rank 2 Magus was leading them. It was already considered pretty good that they had not looked for trouble with others, forget anyone daring to offend them.

With the aid of spells, they travelled rapidly, not being impeded even by rough terrain. Commoners would face difficulties when trying to trek through narrow valleys and scale steep cliffs. Magi just settled any problems with a few spells.

“Is this central Twilight Zone? The quality of life here far surpasses that of the east!”

Leylin had lowered his hood and looked around at the neatly built houses by the roadside. He nodded at the occasional farmer he saw.

The center was the essence of Twilight Zone. Darkness creatures were a rare sight here, and the population density was very high.

However, currently, Leylin could see squires dressed in leather armour running across the region. The farmers mostly looked worried; with north Twilight Zone having fallen, the big war was at their doorstep! The dark elven soldiers and dwarves, gnomes and even darkness creatures from outside the region could all directly arrive at the central region after bypassing the north, which could create a lot of trouble for them.

The central region lacked the strength to repel such raids, especially in terms of magicians. They had no choice but to send out orders to all 4 zones and recruit more acolytes.

At this point in time, a Nature's Alliance Magus came forth and reported to Leylin: “My lord! The leaders of a few medium-scale guilds have come forth to say their goodbyes; they are going to return to the zones they came from!”

“Let them go! They don't have to specially report to me!” Leylin coldly ordered.

A large number of orders sounded in the distance. Some of the smaller troops, like the distributaries of a river, left Nature's Alliance's side.

"What a pity!" Leylin glanced at the small and medium-scale guilds that were leaving, and let out a sigh.

Even though the resources in the central region were good, they had to be exchanged for with one's life!

If these guilds could survive the big war, they would naturally get land as their reward. However, if they risk suffering heavy losses, or even being completely wiped out, then leaving would be the best choice.

Though the central region was rich in resources, even it could not support all the guilds that came.

The war would choose the real winners who would end up with the last laugh! Still, many guilds swarmed to the central region. Even though they knew it was all a gamble, they did not hesitate for a moment to stake everything on this wager. They hoped to gain a lot from it.

"After the war, how many guilds would there be left?" Leylin sighed lightly and closed the windows.

"Send the orders down, we are to advance at full speed and rush to our territory as soon as we can!" On the surface, Leylin was still representing Nature's Alliance's interests, and hence he had ordered so casually.

"As you wish, my lord!"

The orders were quickly passed down through magic spells, and the sounds of the Earth Salamanders and Wildebeest came repeatedly as the entire squadron's speed increased a level.

.....

In yet another region, a few haggard travellers entered the boundaries of the central region.

"Is this the central region?" Baelin swept off the dust on his body and looked at the big city ahead.

He was dressed in oversized grey gunny robes, and a spider streaked in

gold would pop out onto his shoulders from time to time.

“Yes! Advancing after Tran City should lead us to central Twilight Zone!” Memphis was next to Baelin. However, he had currently lost all resemblance to a dark elf, and only looked like a pale-skinned royal.

“Could you get your Underground Winter Spider Emperor to hide? It’s very easy to attract attention here!” He once again looked at the mischievous spider that climbed onto Baelin’s shoulder, and smiled wryly.

Hiss This golden spider seemed to be able to understand human languages, and upon hearing what Memphis said, it let out a threatening screech.

“Aru says that he has restrained his aura, and only rank 2 Magi can see through his transformation; so even if formal Magi were to see the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, they would only treat it as a mutated ordinary spider!” Baelin translated for Memphis, “Also, if you dare to suggest this ever again, he’ll eat you!”

“Alright!” Memphis was rendered speechless.

This Underground Winter Spider Emperor was Baelin’s reward from their excursion into the Dark Elven Empire! Originally, they had planned to attack or subdue the Underground Winter Spider Emperor to halt the war.

However, the Underground Winter Spider Emperor had confoundingly decided to follow Baelin, becoming the Magus’ contracted familiar.

Memphis had not expected that, and after he found out that it could have been the workings of his ancestral amulet, he felt so cheated that he almost went and banged his head against a wall.

Although he knew that his ancestors were royals of a strong clan, he had not expected them to have left such a strong agreement that the owner of the amulet could actually control the Underground Winter Spider Emperor!

That was a being with the strength of a rank 2 Magus! Were he to have gained control of it, the Underground Winter Spider knights would have

defected to his side, but now?

Memphis smiled wryly as he looked at Baelin who was standing at the side.

Even though they had the Underground Winter Spider knights, the proud dark elves simply would not admit that a member of another species could exercise control over their sacred objects. On the contrary, they had viewed this as a great humiliation, and had even launched into a relentless killing spree!

Memphis had seen the Dark Elven Empire's plans fail. He learned through his connections that the dark elves were plotting yet another scheme in the central region, one that could potentially destroy the foundations of the human race!

Upon receiving the news, Baelin had become restless and filled with a strong sense of duty. After ensuring that Jenny settled down, he secretly entered the central region with Memphis.

"What happens to us after this? Do we tell the Magi what we found out?" Baelin suddenly realised that he had no idea about his next course of action.

"Just based on our own merits?" Memphis pointed to himself and smiled bitterly, then pointed to the Underground Winter Spider Emperor on Baelin's shoulders, "A dark elf and a suspicious man with an Underground Winter Spider Emperor?"

"I'm afraid that, before we even utter a single word, the other side will have started flinging spells at us. Needless to say, this information would only be heeded if a rank 2 Magus passed it on, and Aru's stealth would not hold up against such an existence!

"Furthermore, upon seeing an Underground Winter Spider Emperor, a rank 2 Magus would even kill us immediately! After all, their bloodlines ensure that dark elves would instantly weaken the moment an Underground Winter Spider Emperor dies. They would even lose their endless supply of mounts! This would definitely be a huge blow to the Dark Elven Empire! What do you think they would choose to do?"

“Essentially, there’s still no way!” Baelin squatted down and felt dejected.

“However, it is not entirely hopeless!” Memphis’ tone changed.

“There’s hope?” Baelin’s eyes lit up.

“Do you remember that I mentioned Magus Leylin earlier?”

“Master Leylin?” Baelin’s voice held a tinge of respect within it. He saw Leylin as a teacher and was grateful and respectful to him.

“Yes! That Leylin! Did you know that he is actually the most recent Magus to reach rank 2?” Memphis lowered his voice. Even though Leylin was a member of another species, he still held a respect for the strong.

“According to the news I received, not only did he help Fendix attack and kill a rank 2 matriarch at Dolon, he had defeated another matriarch before it! My clan’s intelligence has already marked him as a threat with a danger level of 8!”

“Master! He is actually so... strong?” Baelin’s eyes widened. He had personally witnessed the strength of a rank 2 matriarch.

In the Dark Elven Empire, he and Memphis had been hunted down by a matriarch. If not for the protection of the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, they would definitely not have been able to escape.

The matriarch’s unyielding strength had left a deep impression on the minds of the two.

And now, he was being told that the Master Leylin who had taught him before was even stronger than a rank 2 matriarch?

Baelin’s feelings at that moment were very complicated. There was pride, but there was also regret.

“Yes!” Memphis nodded his head: “Though we’re not of the same kind, I admire him greatly as well!”

“This Master Leylin is definitely a heavy presence in the Magi world, and even has ties with you. You need only pass the intelligence to him...”

Chapter 364: Meeting

“Hm, that is indeed a good idea! But...” Baelin had nodded, but then felt a little guilty.

He had only left behind a letter when he took Jenny away, not even wishing the man goodbye. It was slightly irrational, and even ungrateful.

This had always been a thorn in his heart. However, he had been impulsive as a teenager, and his worry for Jenny’s safety had led him to go through with what he had done.

He had planned to wait until things got better and he managed to make something of himself. He would return as a successful man with a reputation. If he then begged for Leylin’s apology, he believed he would be forgiven.

“Lord Leylin might even make an exception and acknowledge me as his disciple!” Baelin occasionally dreamed of such.

However, the timing was still not right. He was a poor, penniless youngster who was even being chased by the dark elves. If he were to head over now, he would even need to rely on Leylin for help.

Blood rushed to Baelin’s head, and his cheeks flushed.

“What’s wrong?” Memphis asked.

“Oh, nothing, it’s nothing. You have a great idea. Let’s do it!”

“I don’t recommend you do that.” At this moment, a cold female voice sounded beside them.

“Who is it?” Baelin immediately jumped a distance away, his cloak fluttering open. His Bio Boosting Armour, comprising of countless eyes, fused with his body and the Underground Winder Spider Emperor on his shoulder hopped off as it expanded from the size of a fist to that of a two-storeyed building. It turned towards the voice, a translucent liquid dripping from its white teeth.

On the other side, Memphis started to prepare his spells as well, his

body glowing. The relentless pursuit they had escaped from until now had made them paranoid, and they were easily startled.

Red flashing lights revealed the source of the voice to be a female Magus.

This woman wore a large white robe; her charming eyebrows were long and narrow, and the lines on her face were soft and exquisite. She could be considered a rare beauty.

What made her stand out was the five-coloured gemstone bracelet on her pale neck. Energy fluctuations that did not lose out to that of an official Magus emanated from her body.

“Who are you?” Baelin asked guardedly.

This human Magus seemed to be proficient in stealth techniques. She had been able to come close without being noticed, closer than even the dark elven forces that had chased them could get!

“I have no bad intentions.” The female Magus smiled good-naturedly, and then spread her arms.

“My name is Vinas, and I’m a wandering Magus. I’m here to give you some advice” The female Magus’ voice was very calm, and there was a mysterious aura about her. It was an aura found only on the erudite and wise, like elders who had long since learned the ways of the world.

‘No, not erudite! She’s confident, as if the entire world is a toy in her hands!’ Memphis was secretly shocked. This confidence was seldom seen even among matriarchs. This conclusion drove him to further shock, and he went on high alert.

This sort of person was bound to have unfathomable strength or a special ability. It was best if he and Baelin did not do anything that they were not sure would go well.

“Alright! Well then, Ms Vinas, what would you like to tell us?” Memphis had stealthily retreated a few steps, and was using his right sleeve to conceal his actions as he took hold of a simple magic scroll.

“You don’t have to be so wary. I’m a friend who is here to help you!”

Vinas smiled wryly, and without waiting for Memphis to enquire, she began to narrate, “There’s a traitor among the upper ranks of Twilight Zone’s Magi who has colluded with the dark elves. I don’t know this person’s identity yet, but I know he’s shrouded by the fog of destiny. However, he might have a guardian, be it the guild leader of a large-scale guild, or even the Magus Leylin you spoke of! If you enter their hands, the consequences will be dire.”

“There’s a traitor among the higher-ups of Magi?” Baelin cried out, “Where did you get that news?”

“The guidance of destiny lets me see this, just as it lets me see your futures.” A pious expression appeared on Vinas’ face as she walked forward, focusing on Baelin’s face.

“You will become a hero in the future, and I shall be your most loyal subordinate and assistant.” As she said this, she actually half-knelt and performed the rites to vow her loyalty and devotion to him.

“I-I- I’ll become a hero?” Baelin seemed to turn a little stupid, but Memphis had zoned in on the main points of her speech.

“A prophecy? Could you be the legendary witch of destiny, capable of peering into someone’s entire life?”

“Under the guidance of destiny, nothing can be hidden!” Vinas nodded and confirmed her identity.

“A female Magus that can predict the future! So cool!” Baelin cheered.

“History has given birth to many legendary figures like the Lion King and John the Golden Knight. Each of them had a wise and powerful Magus aiding them, one with the power to see the future. Only with this aid did they become the masters of their generations!”

The stream of fortuitous meetings, as well as having the witch of destiny standing on his side made him feel slightly complacent. “Perhaps... I really am destined to be a hero!” These thoughts could not be contained as they took root in Baelin’s mind, a seed that kept growing.

“Baelin, wake up!” Memphis was a little speechless.

They hadn’t even ascertained whether this person was friend or foe, or whether her prophecy was real, yet he had already begun to daydream…?

“My Lady Magus, can you prophesize the conspiracy stirring amongst the dark elves?” Memphis asked what he was most concerned about.

“I’m afraid not! The current of destiny is far too powerful, and I can only see certain images, of specific times and places.” Vinas smoothed her long hair at the back, laughing wryly.

“Also, the dark elves seem to have a helper that is the same as me, able to predict the future.”

“What?” Baelin and Memphis involuntarily cried out at the same time.

Since when did terrifying Magi who could predict the future become so commonplace that they could be found everywhere?

“Alright! Looks like I wasn’t the only one. Well then, Vinas, are you willing to become our companion and adventure with us?” Baelin laughed, stretching his arm towards Vinas.

“It would be my honour!” Vinas’ voice revealed a tinge of emotion. However, the moment their hands touched, her expression changed.

A white circle spread from the centers of her eyes, turning her pupils pure white.

In her line of sight, a young Magus with a black ring was rapidly rushing in their direction. That person also looked in this direction; as if through the power of destiny; they had also noticed her existence.

“This is bad!” Red light flashed from her body, and she quickly turned to leave.

“Don’t even think of running!” On the other end, Aaron now knew the reason why he had been hurrying his journey and feeling so restless.

Another person training in Sacred Flame had already rushed ahead of him and arrived first.

Boom! Boom!

Two rays streaked through the horizon, causing Baelin and Memphis to be unable to make heads or tails of the situation.

“Is she the other Magus?” Aaron’s expression was dark as he asked in his mind.

“Yes. I can feel the aura of another magic artifact I forged on her!” Merlin’s voice was low as he answered quickly.

Rumble!

The two rays clashed, and quickly separated.

However, with that attack, Aaron and Vinas could now see each other clearly.

It was a beautiful female Magus, Aaron judged, but immediately after, a powerful desire exploded from the depths of his heart. This was a violent surge that could not be stopped.

‘Devour her! Devour her! Devour her!’

“What’s going on?” Aaron pressed his hand to his heart, looking ashen. He asked Merlin, “Why do I feel like I need to kill this woman to be whole?”

“Sigh...” Merlin huffed out a long breath, “It looks like the necklace contains a memory fragment of mine, and it has imparted Sacred Flame to her as well!”

“Sacred Flame is an exclusive high-grade meditation technique. In other words, only one Magus in a generation can successfully train in it. The rest might not die, but they won’t be able to attain a higher level in their meditation technique. My apologies...”

“Don’t worry.” Aaron was now a lot more mature, “If not for Sacred Flame, I might have died countless times. Why would I care about that?”

“But does that mean I’m enemies with that female Magus?”

“Yes! Only one person will be able to have the last laugh between you

two, and I hope that will be you,” Merlin’s voice travelled, “Don’t worry, I will do all I can to support you!”

.....

“Everyone has gathered. The show is about to start!”

Leylin occupied the central tent in Nature’s Alliance’s temporary encampment, and it was the most luxurious.

Through the A.I. Chip, he was now checking up on his guinea pigs and their progress in Sacred Flame.

By distributing the old grandpas and his modified technique, he obtained not only a lot of experimental data but also the high-grade meditation techniques that he’d had them steal.

These high-grade meditation techniques were normally only passed on to guild members. However, with an unwitting spy amongst their ranks, obtaining them was very easy.

“Looks like I’ve managed to successfully modify prophecies!” Leylin scratched his chin.

That prediction of a traitor had been a cock and bull story he had conjured up, but it had successfully deceived Vinas. This allowed Leylin to be even more confident in his future plans.

“But that last guinea pig is really exceeding my expectations! He actually chose to side with the dark elves. How daring!”

Chapter 365: Life Absorption

Leylin was actually full of praise for the last guinea pig.

To be able to overcome the pressure to help their own race, and to disregard the norms and side with the enemy race, that required courage and decisiveness that not many possessed.

“It’s a pity that since all the information you get is transparent to me, it’s useless no matter what you do.” Leylin sighed, eyes flashing with a dangerous light.

“My lord!” At this moment, a Magus’ voice sounded outside.

“Come in!”

“Yes!” The fabric for the tent was pushed aside, and a kindly old geezer entered. This was Iren, the peak rank 1 Magus Leylin had forced into his service.

He had many plans for the central region, and had naturally brought his strongest helpers to put them into practice.

“The inconveniences around Ardent Gale Lake have been taken care of. We can move in at any time,” Iren respectfully lowered his head, reporting to Leylin.

Though the central region had gone all out and agreed to give Nature’s Alliance resources that were usually reserved for large-scale guilds, there were still many problems which Nature’s Alliance needed to handle themselves.

Magi could be controlled, but dangerous creatures would not obediently listen to the orders of the war council.

“You did well!” Leylin nodded slightly.

Ardent Gale Lake was where they were going to be garrisoned. It would be Nature’s Alliance’s headquarters in the central region.

Iren responded deferentially to Leylin’s indifferent commands, and withdrew quickly.

“Also!” Just as Iren was about to leave, he heard Leylin’s voice, “I want to go out for a bit, and I’m leaving you in charge. Be careful of the surrounding dangers.”

“Of course, my lord.” Iren bowed even lower.

“En!” Leylin nodded, waving his arms and letting Iren leave.

The next job was construction, something that was both troublesome and time-consuming. Leylin could not be bothered with helping, so he left everything to Iren.

If this was his previous world, this might result in him becoming a mere figurehead, but the Magus world was different.

His own strength rivalled or even surpassed that of the rest of Nature’s Alliance combined! Not to mention, he still had full control of Iren’s life. He still had the man’s spirit source!

Hence, Leylin did not worry one bit that Iren would betray him.

“It’s also time to see some old friends.” Leylin laughed slightly, and his body was suddenly engulfed in black mist.

Pak! With a light noise, the black mist suddenly exploded, and Leylin’s figure disappeared from the tent.

.....

“Ernis, are you sure that he is vulnerable right now? This is a rank 2 Magus we’re talking about!”

Somewhere else underground, Longbottom wore his black robes with an image of a spider twisting on the back. Eight jet-black claws stretched towards the air, as if trying to draw in some mysterious energy.

“Of course, my lord!” The Magus named Ernis was a pale, sturdy man. His features were clear and he wore exquisite handmade armour. The tattered notebook in his hand stood out, as if it didn’t belong there.

“The great Magus Rosby, the guild leader of Green Waters Garden, will be weakened by restrictions in his high-grade meditation technique, and his strength will fall from that of a rank 2 Magus. I’ve already foreseen the

exact time, and even his hiding spot!”

Ernis sounded very confident.

Ever since he’d begun practicing Sacred Flame, every prophecy he’d made had played out in real life. Naturally, he had grown to be sure of their accuracy.

“Good! This operation will be a big one!”

Longbottom closed his eyes, as if he was communicating with the spider on his back. He then suddenly spoke, “The Magi that belong to guilds all own the most land and have the best resources, and restrict us from advancing. They monopolize high-grade meditation techniques and cruelly exploit we acolytes and Magi who have humble backgrounds. Can you tolerate that?”

Longbottom’s body floated to the air, sound magic amplifying his voice tenfold such that it resounded in the underground cavity.

“No!” “No!”

Within this cavity, there were a few acolytes and Magi besides Ernis. Though they looked to be down and out, their eyes seemed to be ablaze.

Few magicians were lucky enough to find inheritances on their own. If the rest were not nurtured by guilds, their futures would be bleak.

As a result of unfair treatment and having been pushed around for a long period of time, Longbottom had easily lit their hearts aflame. He had needed to spend little energy in gathering a large group of magicians to his side.

With the secret support of the dark elves, as well as Longbottom’s generous distribution of high-grade meditation techniques, these magicians had increased their strength by a level or two.

Magi who were able to survive in the cracks of society were all quite capable in their own right, and the amount of power they had been able to muster had left Longbottom tongue-tied.

Now, by brainwashing them into desiring change by revolution,

Longbottom had played these Magi into the palm of his hands.

“What do we need?” Longbottom’s voice boomed.

“Revolution!” “Revolution!” “Revolution!”

The sound waves almost launched Ernis off his feet. He stood aside, hearing the acolytes and even official Magi’s shouting themselves hoarse, and flushed red. He felt incomparably cold inside.

At this moment, he felt a mysterious power shrouding them. It seemed as heavy as the mountains and seas, but it had no element to it.

After training in Sacred Flame, Ernis was extremely clear of what this energy was.

“The power of destiny, and so concentrated at that!” Ernis muttered.

“We are now going to destroy a large-scaled guild and kill the rank 2 Magus, Rosby.” Longbottom ordered, full of spirit. Behind him, the spider totem’s eyes suddenly brightened.

Ka-cha! Ka-cha! Soft booms sounded from Longbottom’s body as elemental rings of light appeared around him. These were the symbol of a semi-converted Magus.

Immediately, numerous energy rings appeared, creating brilliant lights and vibrant colours. Longbottom’s aura constantly strengthened, until it would not lose out to a peak rank 1 Magus.

“‘Life Absorption,’ a high-grade meditation technique used by dark elven matriarchs. Through drawing on the life force of others, one can advance very quickly, but the aftereffects are severe. If they cannot gather the requisite amount of life energy every day, then the Magus’ own life force will quickly wither, until the technique has drained them completely of their life.”

Ernis lowered his head, hiding the glint in his eyes.

“Looks like Longbottom has been gaining a higher status at the dark elves’ end, and I have pretty much entered the dark elves’ camp and turned into a traitor.”

A sardonic smile appeared on his lips, "But so what if I betrayed them? Magi should only consider their own benefits. My counterparts are still contesting the other child of destiny, how would they have the advantage I gain by being alone? I will be the one with the last laugh!"

Ernis roared in his heart. He felt his own body twist, and the meditation technique that had been advancing at a snail's pace began to progress at a rapid rate.

He suddenly raised his head and looked at Longbottom, who was ready and waiting.

In his vision, of the powers of destiny that had gathered on Longbottom's self, a part had quickly turned towards him.

Ka-cha! As if he had broken through some bottleneck, tiny elemental rings appeared in his hands, along with a crisp sound emanating from his body.

From a normal Magus who had just advanced, he had become a semi-converted Magus.

"As expected. By changing the course of the river of destiny and taking in its power, Sacred Flame can improve at a rapid pace!" The burly man's eyes were filled with a crazed excitement.

"How is it? I didn't lie to you, did I?" A voice suddenly sounded from the tattered notebook.

"En! I was too careless previously. I apologise, dear Magus Merlin!"

The man did not hesitate to lower his head, since he would lose nothing by apologizing.

"You really are quite gutsy to dare tamper with destiny on such a large scale. Longbottom could very well die there!" The old geezer Merlin touched his beard, "Even I have rarely done something this crazy in the 3200 years of my life!"

"Hehe. Longbottom is a child of destiny, he won't die so easily. As for the other Magi? What do their lives have to do with me?" Ernis snickered,

“Even if the child of destiny really were to die here, that will alter the course of the river of destiny as well. How much power could I get from that?”

“And after that, you will be devoured and killed.” Merlin refuted without hesitation.

“It’s all a gamble. I don’t care.” The burly man chuckled, radiating an aura of determination and madness.

These two auras mixed together and formed something even more contradictory.

Merlin sighed, but did not speak further. Inside, however, it was sending the main A.I. Chip and Leylin some information.

[Target has developed type 2 mental breakdown. Data has been recorded as such: ...]

“Hm?”

Somewhere at a high altitude, Leylin halted his footsteps.

“Interesting! What an interesting plan!”

His lips quirked up in a smile.

“The central region is unstable right now, but it hasn’t been pushed past the tipping point yet. Let me be the one to do that.”

Chapter 366: Backlash

The field had been partitioned, with a large mill occupying the center.

Not far away, there was a small farm and a stone castle. However, it was very small and lacked a moat.

At a glance, it looked to be the territory of a small aristocratic family.

In a shadow, Ernis had respectfully lowered his head and was reporting to Longbottom. "My lord, I can confirm that this is a secret stronghold of the Green Water Gardens guild. The Great Magus Rosby who is in his down period is hiding here."

"En! This is their nest, and there should be many defensive spell formations. Since they're a rank 2 Magus, even if they were weakened temporarily, they cannot be compared to an ordinary peak rank 1 Magus!" Longbottom muttered to himself, and then glanced at his subordinates.

Those following him were all official Magi, but few were even semi-converted. He could unearth their potentials, but what he needed was time.

He had brought them along now as a declaration of allegiance, to form an impassable divide between them and the ruling class.

Longbottom glanced at the few figures dressed in black robes. These people had slim bodies and had concealed their features with large cloaks. The cloaks were so large, in fact, that one could not even tell the men from the women.

These were the backup he had been given by the dark elves. All of them were at the peak of rank 1.

As for the rank 2 matriarchs? Every single action of theirs was being monitored; it was impossible for one to sneak across the border to conduct an assassination.

In addition, even if they somehow got in, they would be surrounded and attacked by the Magi of Twilight Zone.

Dark elves could bear the deaths of rank 1 Magi, but rank 2 matriarchs were the backbones of their clans; their presence was a spiritual support to the clan members, boosting their morale. The death of a matriarch was a heavy loss for any clan.

It was for this reason that Fendix, who had killed a matriarch, had gained large rewards from Twilight Zone as well as a huge bounty from the Dark Elven Empire. Honestly speaking, the rewards that the crazed dark elves promised had even tempted Leylin.

Fendix himself was so frightened that he spent all his time at the headquarters of his guild, and had naturally not come to the aid of the central region.

“Go!” With Longbottom’s order, flames of death descended on this peaceful field.

Rumble! Fireballs rained down like meteors, sending sparks flying everywhere.

“What’s going on?” A knight dressed in the garb of nobility rushed out, shocked.

“A-An attack from Magi? Why? Are they dark elves?”

Xiu! After seeing the situation, he retreated without the slightest hesitation, leaving his territory, subjects and even family behind.

As a knight who had entered the battlefield before, he knew the terror that Magi brought with them. He knew that once they attacked, this place was doomed.

“Don’t let any of them go!”

Longbottom watched the knight who was darting away and pointed at him like one would at an ant.

A deathly light streaked across the sky and reached his back. Like cutting through cotton, it easily penetrated the knight’s defence and exploded on his back.

Bang! A hole that could fit a basketball was opened up, revealing white

bones and black blood. The knight's eyes were filled with fear, as well as shock. The powerful inertia allowed him to run a few more steps before he fell with a thud.

Under the constant onslaught of spells, the village turned into a sea of fire. None of the peasants lived, and it soon turned into a white land.

However, Longbottom was still not satisfied and ordered the Magi to quicken their actions.

Layers of soil were lifted, revealing a glossy rock wall, with runes on it concealing any energy fluctuations.

“Hehe, he's actually liked a groundhog hiding under the feet of regular humans, and has even carved energy runes to conceal his aura. This Magus Rosby really is rather timid...” Longbottom sneered, and pointed at the magic wall.

“Destroy it!”

Rumble! Numerous spells were interrupted by several rays of light before they could reach the rock wall.

Rumble! The rock separated, revealing a large door.

Thud! Thud! Accompanied by heavy footsteps, four large silver guards walked out.

These silver guards were all adorned in heavy armour, and their expressions were moulded to be blank. There was even some light flashing out of their eyes like a searchlight.

Ernis immediately stepped forward and spoke “Rosby is very careful and cautious. He hasn't revealed this location to any other Magus, and even the guard has been set up by him alone, consisting only of Secret Silver Puppets. Hence, he's the only one in here. We need to prevent him from fleeing.” As for how he had found this out, it would stay a secret.

“When working together, these four Secret Silver Puppets are equivalent to two peak rank 1 Magi. The two of you, go up there and stop them. The revolutionary army will be around to keep them from fleeing.”

Longbottom quickly sent down the command.

The two black-robed people charged up without a word.

Roar! The Secret Silver Puppets yelled and brandished their large silver swords, battling the black-robed elves.

Immense energy fluctuations gave rise to a storm, sweeping through the region.

The revolutionary army Longbottom had brought with him dared only to watch on from a distance, occasionally supporting the two and pinning the guards down.

“Ernis and the rest, follow me.” Longbottom shook his robes, and the rest of the dark elves and Ernis followed him.

Only after they were far from everyone’s eyes did Longbottom speak to Ernis, “Quick! Find the escape routes Rosby could be using!”

“Come with me!” Moments later, Ernis led the way.

“Go!” Longbottom watched Ernis who was leading the way, eyes darting everywhere. Nobody could guess his thoughts.

In a little farm about five kilometers away...

Pala! The soil flipped over, revealing a dark pathway.

A grim middle-aged man in dark red Magus robes walked out. After glancing at his surroundings, he immediately unfurled a scroll. Green hurricanes blew forth, and a large pair of wings formed on his back.

“I can’t stay here any longer. How did this get out?”

This Magus was obviously Green Water Gardens’ rank 2 Magus, Rosby.

He was obviously in a stale mood. The location that only he knew of had been leaked, and someone had even found him while he was weak. The whole situation reeked of a conspiracy.

However, he had another question. “I didn’t tell anyone about this place. How did they find out?”

However, he did not dare dwell on this for long, “This place is dangerous.

I'll think about it after I leave."

Just as Rosby was about to spread his wings, an extreme sense of danger came upon him.

He immediately retreated, his figure turning into an afterimage.

Rumble! A large explosion occurred right where he had been standing, and the energy particles that were dispelled caused massive damage to the ground.

Xiu! Xiu! Two black streaks of light flew across the sky, forming a cross in mid-air. These arches accurately homed in on Rosby's wings.

"This trajectory? It's the dark elves' curved archery! You are dark elves!" The wings fell apart, and Rosby paled before crying out in alarm.

Shua! Black light flashed, and a distortion appeared in the air, revealing a few figures.

Longbottom took the lead, and the two robed people behind him also took off their clothes, revealing pale, handsome features and pointed ears.

The twisted runes on their fantastic black bows were now flickering.

"Humans and dark elves! Looks like you are the revolutionary army that has been causing such a ruckus. You are the leader, right? Longbottom?" Rosby calmed down.

"Yes!" Longbottom bowed, "As a rank 2 Magus, you are my senior, but for our hopes and future, please die."

Rumble! Just as his words sounded, the dark elves suddenly attacked.

Black streams of air formed what looked like a spider web and fell from the skies. On Longbottom's body, the phantom image of a large giant appeared and jumped onto the web, hissing loudly.

"Combination magic? Its power is almost as much as that of a rank 2 spell!" A strange smile appeared on his face, "But just that isn't enough."

Rumble! A torrential power exploded forth from Rosby's body, as if a landslide or tsunami had come upon the area. Silver spiritual force

slashed at the skies like a sharp sword, and quickly severed the web into two. The phantom image was also bisected, causing both Longbottom and the dark elves to pale.

“Rank 2 strength! You’re not weak anymore!” Longbottom had become deathly pale, his voice quivering.

“Impossible! Impossible!” Ernis could not believe it either.

“Recognise the reality of it! Your opponent is a rank 2 Magus. How could he not have a few trump cards? Even if his strength might have been lowered because he was in his down period, he can still suppress that for a while and reveal true rank 2 strength!” Merlin’s voice sounded in Ernis’ mind.

“How is this possible? I didn’t predict...” Ernis was flushing red, but suddenly became silent, like a duck that had been grasped at the neck.

“Do you understand now? You’re only a rank 1 Magus, and in ancient times you’d be considered as just having crossed the gates of becoming a Magus. With just this bit of strength, it’s impossible for you to completely predict the trump cards of a rank 2 Magus using Sacred Flame, even if he were weakened or heavily injured. The fog of destiny may shroud him, or even counterattack!”

Merlin’s voice was as cold as ice. “Now, do you know why I fell?”

Chapter 367: Clone Seed

Ernis looked defeated. “So I’m definitely going to die?”

Merlin sneered in his mind. “Not necessarily! Longbottom is a child of destiny, and is not one to fall so easily. Besides, do you think the matriarch backing him doesn’t have any contingency plans?”

“You dare offend me, a respected rank 2 Magus? You will pay for this humiliation in blood!” Rosby declared grimly, and a line of spiritual force converged that was tinged silver.

The rank 2 Magus had even been slightly frightened. If he hadn’t possessed a technique that could temporarily suppress his weakness, he could have died just then.

A rank 2 Magus dying at the hands of a group of rank 1 Magi would be the biggest joke in Twilight Zone’s history!

Rosby felt like a robust adult who had been bitten by an ant. The humiliation irked him to his soul.

This secret technique was not without cost. His period of vulnerability would be extended, and in the times of war, this could have had deadly consequences. Hence, he was now truly enraged.

“I shall turn you into maggots, making you rot and suffer underground for ten thousand years. I swear it!” Rosby’s eyes were completely red, and great amounts of solidified silver spiritual force swept through the area.

“Damn it. Use that!” Longbottom yelled.

The two dark elves behind him exchanged a glance and nodded, silver rays shooting out of their eyes. In that moment, their expressions were that of those preparing for death.

They then produced jewelled daggers with a strange curve, aimed them at their own hearts and jabbed in.

Puk! Puk! Two peak rank 1 elves collapsed, a bloody mist spreading from their chests.

The phantom image of the spider behind Longbottom had been seriously injured by spiritual force and was on the verge of disappearing. However, it suddenly twitched and absorbed the red blood-mist, quickly restoring itself. Its aura continually strengthened, until it was almost strong enough to rival the rank 2 Magus ahead of it.

“What-What’s going on?” Ernis was astonished.

“Hehe, nothing much. It’s just a sacrifice! The same old thing that the dark elves always use.” Merlin laughed sarcastically.

“Dark elven society is made up of clans. Every clan has its matriarch, and they all have immense control over their descendants. This control runs deep in the blood, and is very difficult to free oneself from. Even if it’s a peak rank 1 Magus, a mere spiritual suggestion would convince them to kill themselves without hesitation.”

“The meditation technique Longbottom is training in is one that absorbs life energy. After absorbing that of two peak rank 1 Magi, although he can’t defeat his opponent, he will most likely escape...”

“Hm? What about me?” Ernis was suddenly put in a difficult spot. Longbottom could leave, but he was just a semi-converted Magus. How was he to escape?

“This is the retaliation of destiny! Longbottom, being a child of destiny, can escape successfully. You’ll be left behind as an outlet for the rank 2 Magus to vent his anger upon!” Merlin’s voice was frigid, rendering Ernis silent.

His eyes turned white again as he tried to think up some countermeasures. He was trying to make a prediction, but he did not get anything.

“What should I do next?” Ernis’ voice was hoarse.

“Pray! At this point, you can do nothing but pray!” Merlin’s voice displayed his helplessness, “If I still had my body, killing him would be as easy as crushing an ant. But now? You can only hope he doesn’t prolong your life to torture you.”

“No! No! I still have hope!” Ernis stared hard at Longbottom, “As long as my lord is willing to save me, I can...”

Ernis’ words stuck in his throat. He watched as Longbottom, who was manipulating the phantom spider and battling with Rosby, quickly withdrew.

Black gas flew everywhere and increased his speed. In a moment, he disappeared into the horizon.

“I... I...” Ernis’ eyes were filled with despair.

On the other end, Rosby who had lost Longbottom turned his attention to the semi-converted Magus.

A giant silver claw flew forth, its strength not something that Ernis could resist, and grabbed him!

“Am I going to die? I can’t accept this!” Ernis closed his eyes. Powerful solidified spiritual force causing the magical power in his body to become sluggish in its movements. He could do nothing in the face of a rank 2 Magus’ wrath.

“Rosby!”

At this moment, a low voice sounded from the horizon a long distance away, carrying with it a berserk energy.

“Hm? An opportunity! A person seeking revenge against Rosby seems to have appeared. I’ll use my power to cover your presence. Quick, run!”

Merlin’s voice was hurried, and with a sudden feeling of coldness infiltrating his senses, Ernis found himself able to move once again. He quickly escaped, dodging the attack of the giant claw. Without looking behind him, he quickly left.

Rosby did not pursue him, because a rank 2 spiritual force was now focused on him. He raised his head and saw a black figure rushing over from the horizon.

This figure’s face was shrouded by black mist, causing him to be unable to tell the real appearance of this person.

“Who are you? I don’t think we’ve met.” Rosby sounded out.

He was currently in a very dangerous situation, and his secret technique could lose its effect at any time, causing him to fall down to rank 1. That would be very dangerous.

“It doesn’t matter who I am, but this is a seed I planted. How could I let you harvest it?” The figure’s voice was robotic, obviously having been altered.

“Seed? Harvest? Are you...” Rosby’s stunned expression immediately warped into an immense fear.

Mist! Large amounts of black mist brought with it a silver luster, forming a large maze that trapped him within.

“He plans to limit my strength, and after my secret technique stops working, he’ll deal with me.” Rosby could tell his opponent’s intentions with a glance. He waved his arm, and numerous silver arrows flew into the mist.

Pu pu! Pu pu! Pu pu!

The arrows of light flew into the wall of mist and instantly disappeared, causing Rosby to pale.

“You don’t need to consider calling a friend or anything of the sort. This place has already been sealed by me, and no information can be transmitted out.”

The voice from before sounded in the black maze, but it did come from a single location.

His opponent was very cautious in dealing with a rank 2 Magus that had used a secret technique to somehow return to his regular strength. He had not appeared, preventing him from using some powerful force that could destroy everything.

A look of hopelessness appeared on Rosby’s face.

Ten or so minutes passed, and Rosby bellowed, unresigned. The aura on his body quickly weakened, and lines of wrinkles appeared on his face. His

appearance changed from that of a middle-aged man to that of an old man.

This meant the secret technique was no longer in effect. He was once again weak, vulnerable.

Seeing this, large amounts of mist pounced on him...

Pak! The black maze dispersed, and a single black flame fell, burning Rosby's corpse to ashes.

Leylin weighed the green ring in his hand, a smile blossoming on his face.

"As expected of the guild leader of a large-scaled guild. He's accumulated plenty of things, and there's even a spacial magic artifact!"

He stared closely at the ring in his hand. It was extremely slender and looked like it was for a female to use. Its surface was decorated with flowers and vines, forming an exotic image.

"There are many good items in this spatial ring, but the defensive layer on the surface is slightly troublesome. I'll need to use the A.I. Chip and slowly analyse it."

Leylin scratched his chin and kept the green ring away.

Rosby was a rank 2 Magus and had a spatial item. He would definitely have a lot of resources on his body, the total value of which could even exceed that of those stored in Green Water Gardens' headquarters.

Gaining this was akin to robbing a large-scaled guild, as well as all the property belonging to a rank 2 Magus.

"The gains aren't too bad this time. Also, hehe..." Leylin laughed coldly.

On the surface of the ring, he felt a tiny connection to a being a distance away. This meant that Rosby had yet to truly die.

The connection was minute, and if not for Leylin already being a rank 2 Magus, as well as the A.I. Chip's help in carefully scanning the ring a few times, he might not even have noticed this.

If his opponent were to escape this time and find the ring on Leylin's person, things would be bad.

But now? Leylin glanced in the direction that Ernis had fled, a slight smile on his face.

"It's great that you could come back!" Longbottom glanced at Ernis, revealing a bright smile.

"I was just lucky!" Ernis laughed wryly, though the seed of distrust had been planted within him.

The two of them had already returned to the little manor.

The four Secret Silver Puppets had been reduced to dust after being attacked by the two dark elves and many Magi.

"Do you know who that Magus is?" Longbottom asked Ernis.

"No, but he should be an enemy of Rosby's. The strength of a rank 2 Magus is too far off, so I couldn't gather any useful information." Ernis seemed a little regretful.

All of a sudden, he felt a prophecy entering his mind, and his eyes turned white.

"Rosby is dead, but the seed of a clone is still within the headquarters of Green Water Gardens!"

Ernis quickly passed on this information to Longbottom and asked, "What should we do?"

"Is there a need to ask?" A sinister smile appeared on Longbottom's face.

"Summon our people. We shall go to their headquarters!"

Chapter 368: Intrinsic Quality

There was still something else that Longbottom had not mentioned.

“Since the Magus that appeared seemed to have some squabble with Rosby, I’ll definitely get into the good books of that Magus if I kill Rosby completely in Green Water Gardens and destroy his guild. I can then try to rope them in...”

As a spy of the dark elves, Longbottom never forgot his own mission – create chaos and lower the might of Twilight Zone. If he could rope in a rank 2 Magus, that would be an immense merit!

At this thought, his heart began to blaze.

It had not been a mere day or two since the dark elves had infiltrated Twilight Zone. Longbottom immediately procured a map of Green Water Gardens.

In addition, Ernis had supported him with information about their defensive spell formations and weak points.

Green Radiance City was the central region headquarters of Green Water Gardens. Today, it had been met with a calamity.

Flames burned everywhere, painting the sky half red. The defensive spell formations had collapsed, and the Magi lying in wait outside all charged in.

“Kill!” Longbottom took the initiative, mysterious green light bursting from his hands.

The Magi who were obstructing him wilted, drying up into corpses on the road. Amongst them were Magi who, like him, were at the peak of rank 1!

Green Water Gardens was a large-scale guild, and there were quite a few peak rank 1 Magi and contracted creatures in charge of it. However, under the attacks of Longbottom’s revolutionary army and the dark elves, they were unable to endure for long.

“This way!” Ernis’ eyes turned white, and like someone familiar with the route, he brought Longbottom further in.

Minutes later, they arrived beside a large ancient tree. Crack! The ancient tree was prised open violently, revealing a descending passageway.

Luminescent defensive spell formations appeared. Having been set up by a rank 2 Magus, they possessed immense magic power.

Longbottom sneered, “Looks like Rosby’s clone seed really is underneath!”

He did have a certain amount of knowledge about these clone seeds. Each seed could only live on and grow after the death of the original body.

In addition, he could not immediately regain his strength of rank 2. It would be miraculous even if he managed to keep the strength of a rank 1 Magus.

The value of a clone seed was that it was a second life. Even when one was training their way up again, there would be no bottlenecks impeding them from achieving their original rank.

The clone would originally be very weak, but as time passed, it would grow even more terrifying than the original. Hence, it was wise to exterminate it as soon as possible.

Ernis tested the formations with an instrument, and his expression warped instantly. “These defensive formations set up by a rank 2 Magus are quite strong. A peak rank 1 Magus will have to attack them for about half an hour to break them apart.”

“There’s no need for that!” Longbottom waved his hands, producing a black crystal.

“This is a gift from the matriarch. Sealed within is one of her full-powered attacks. It just so happens that this is a good place to use it!” Longbottom crushed the crystal in his hands.

Chi chi! The confused cries of numerous bugs echoed out.

A huge phantom spider appeared, this one purple. Its compound eyes

shone with wisdom, even sentience, as it swept past Longbottom, Ennis, and the rest.

Ennis felt his heart go cold. When he was being stared at by this spider, it felt as if all his thoughts and secrets had been discovered by it.

Pak!

The purple phantom spider condensed into a ball of energy, striking the defensive radiance.

Creak! A large depression appeared on the defensive layer. All sorts of runes flashed, and there were also sounds of something breaking.

Upon seeing this, Longbottom's eyes brightened and he shouted at Ennis. "Attack together!"

All sorts of spells and lights crashed onto the surface of the defensive spell formation.

Like the last straw that broke a camel's back, the two's spells reached the layer and caused the spell formation to tremble.

Petals of light with runes on them continuously withered and fell, turning into little bits of light that floated away like fireflies.

The defensive spell formation set up by a rank 2 Magus were broken through with their combined effort!

"I can feel his aura inside!" Longbottom's eyes brightened, as if he had smelled something delicious. His eyes glowed green as he rushed in.

Ennis hesitated for a moment, and followed him inside.

"Haha..." After passing through a short passageway, Ennis heard Longbottom laughing maniacally.

He entered an underground laboratory to see Longbottom holding a little boy's throat, laughing loudly.

"Great Magus Rosby, guild leader of Green Water Gardens, O powerful rank 2 Magus! Where is your power? Where is your might? Where is your grace? Where has it all gone to?" Longbottom chuckled brashly in front of

the child.

Vile characters always sought revenge not past the night. He had just escaped from his opponent with difficulty, but he could now grasp his opponent by the neck, controlling his opponent's life and death. Longbottom was left feeling drunk on this feeling.

He had even assumed Rosby to be another rank 2 Magus.

Ernis was shocked to find that this little boy's face was similar to Rosby's, who he had seen previously. His skin was slippery, with the placenta and mucus still attached to him. At this moment, he knew this person's identity.

Although Rosby had successfully reincarnated using the seed he had prepared beforehand, his current body only held the power of an acolyte. In front of Longbottom, he was as weak as an ant.

"But you still have your uses!" The green in Longbottom's eyes seemed to solidify.

"Though you are an acolyte, you are still a rank 2 Magus at your core! Absorbing you will further my insights into rank 2!"

Longbottom smiled slightly, and lights flashed in his hands. Thin threads of red and green were drawn from the boy's body, entering his palm.

The boy aged rapidly even as Longbottom seemed to be drunk with pleasure.

Moments later, face frozen in terror, Rosby collapsed to the ground. As if a mere dried husk, his body cracked apart on contact.

Longbottom's face flushed red, as if it had received some great supplements.

"Quick! Move everything of value away before support arrives. Destroy what we cannot take!" Longbottom's aura had changed after absorbing the life force of a rank 2 Magus. Ernis deferentially lowered his head, not daring to meet his gaze.

.....

At the same time, in the cover of shadows, Leylin's figure somehow appeared above Green Radiance City.

Pak!

With the complete death of Rosby, the green ring in his hands also produced a crisp sound. Scans by his spiritual force and the A.I. Chip revealed that all connection to the outside world had been broken completely.

This meant that Rosby's clone had been annihilated.

"Not bad!" A smile appeared on Leylin's face.

The prophecies from before were planted by Leylin, letting him eliminate Green Water Gardens and Rosby's clone.

Furthermore, with the most valuable items all in Rosby's spatial ring, Leylin had no intentions of vying over anything with these paupers.

"Time to leave!" He looked up at the sky far away, and disappeared with a shake of his head.

Moments after Leylin left, the sounds of hurried huffs sounded from that very position. The Magi who had newly arrived looked very benevolent.

Green Radiance City was now in a state of chaos...

A few days later, a monumental piece of news was transmitted throughout central Twilight Zone. It spread to the other regions as well, and at an alarming rate. Green Water Gardens, the large-scale guild, had been destroyed by Longbottom's revolutionary army!

Even Lord Rosby, their guild leader who was rank 2, had fallen in this battle.

The fall of a rank 2 Magus caused a sensation. With the loss of Rosby, their official Magi, and their inheritances, Green Water Gardens would soon become an unrated guild even if there were a few acolytes lucky enough to survive.

With this task, Longbottom's name spread throughout Twilight Zone, and the war council put out an astronomical bounty on him; his danger had even been rated at seven stars!

.....

Elsewhere, Leylin had also visited Logan, the Protector of the East.

Logan was one to abide by his promises, and he'd brought his guild to the central region. He had even stationed himself near Nature's Alliance and a few other guilds.

"We need to suppress them! I've already sent out the enforcers and soldiers to wipe out their strongholds."

Logan huffed roughly, but Leylin maintained a thoughtful silence.

"These rogue Magi are really out of control. And then there's Longbottom. We need to behead him and store his spirit in the council as a reminder to all Magi!" Logan heaved.

Leylin laughed in his mind. Logan was truly feeling anxious.

Previously, rank 2 Magi could disregard Longbottom and his revolutionary army, but now that one of their own had fallen at his hands, they could ignore him no longer.

"In the middle of a great war, there are still so many lawless Magi who are causing trouble at home. We definitely can't give way. We have to suppress them mercilessly!"

Logan declared his stance, "This is the unanimous decision of the war council. In addition, no matter which wandering Magus it is, as long as they dare have any opinions about having sympathy or support for the revolutionary army, they shall also be punished."

Leylin nodded. Guilds still held immense influence, and were entirely capable of ending these fads.

Chapter 369: A Competition For Geniuses

Leylin deliberated over his phrasing. “But to do that, you’ll have to deploy the higher-ups!”

If the guilds joined forces, they could naturally extinguish the scattered rebels, but part of their forces would be tied down. With the north down, and casualties stacking up at the center, the cost outweighed the benefits involved.

“Then what do you suggest?” Logan seemed to be able to tell the hidden meaning in Leylin’s words.

“The rebels led by Longbottom definitely need to be suppressed and exterminated, but I believe we can try to pacify the wandering Magi.”

Leylin stroked his chin.

“How? Twilight Zone has a limited amount of resources. Are you, Nature’s Alliance, going to pay out of your pocket?” Logan was slightly annoyed.

“No, of course not!” Leylin smiled while he shook his head, “What do you say we hold a competition for young Magi?”

“Competition?” Logan was baffled.

“Yes, a competition between geniuses! It will be targeted at young Magi, with generous rewards and the opportunity to join some guilds. If they obtain a certain ranking, they can even enter a guild of their choice!” Leylin declared his scheme.

“With this, not only can we unite more wandering Magi and express our goodwill to the organisations behind them, we can also shift their focus from the unfairness of guilds to the vying for a position, causing internal friction!”

“This... Let me think...” Logan scratched his beard.

Leylin paid no attention to him and smiled, because he knew Logan was considering his suggestion.

As expected, minutes later, Logan roughly slapped the table, "It's a good idea! Of course! Why didn't I think of it?"

He stood up and quickly paced around the room. "No matter how much we try to tempt those old Magi, it's all going to be in vain. They've already lost all chances of improving anyway, and won't be able to cause many problems!

"On the other hand, the competition offers young Magi more than just glory. The generous rewards and the opportunity to join a guild will surely tempt them! We just need to hand some things out, and it will definitely change the dynamics of their army. We might even be able to pick up some good seedlings! Not bad... not bad at all!"

Logan kept nodding. He, too, knew that pressuring the lower strata was not a good idea, especially in times of war. Prying them apart would lead to a much better ending.

"I'll go and report your suggestion to the council, they'll definitely agree!" he did not even bother to hide his excitement, yelling out his agreement.

Meanwhile, Leylin revealed a profound smile. There was something else he had yet to say, but he was sure Logan understood it as well.

Setting up a competition to select Magi and taking them into guilds was also a type of revolution. This was a step in the direction of the setup of the academies on the south coast.

This way, Longbottom's righteous cause would be wounded in multiple ways. When that happened, it would be the best time to capture and kill him!

At the same time, the various Magi training in Sacred Flame all fell into a stupor. They were all receiving a prophecy.

"Countless stars are congregating there. It is the location of both the beginning and the end of everything!"

Aaron's eyes recovered from having been all-white, the fear still lingering in him as he patted his chest.

“I actually automatically made a prophecy! Looks like the force of destiny is unprecedentedly powerful.”

“Of course! A competition between genius Magi! Not only wandering Magi, but also geniuses of guilds can also enter. The judges will be the protectors of the four regions who are at least rank 2, and the legendary protector of all regions might even appear!”

In front of him, Vinas rolled her eyes and said sarcastically.

“You-” Aaron was so furious that he turned red, almost getting up.

“Alright, alright. Can you not quarrel!”

Baelin was now wearing his Bio Boosting Armour, his aura more vast and profound as a result of the power of destiny converging on his body. Though he couldn't feel anything himself, for Aaron and Vinas who trained in Sacred Flame, the change was as obvious as the lighting of a torch in the darkness.

“What did you see?” Baelin asked curiously.

Under his supervision, these two prophetic Magi were currently at peace, having decided to first crush the dark elves' conspiracy before battling it out among themselves. Sometimes, however, the two would be at odds, which would end up giving him a headache.

“Not too long later, central Twilight Zone will hold a competition for young genius Magi! The only restriction is that one must be younger than 50 to attend.”

“In addition, the champion of the competition will even be able to meet the great protector of all regions and be given access to profound Magi academic knowledge, as well as assistance to advance forcefully.”

Aaron couldn't help but gulp. Even he was enticed by such temptations.

The young female Magus called Vinas continued, “Most of Twilight Zone's geniuses will attend, including Longbottom who's sided with the dark elves. He'll be waiting to cause trouble!

“And because there's another Magus like us helping him and covering

him with a fog of destiny, I can't tell for sure what their exact plan is and whether they'll succeed."

"Longbottom..." Baelin muttered, his eyes dim.

He knew that this kid that he had thought highly of had quickly become an official Magus and even sided with the dark elves. He'd probably played a big role in the fall of the north.

"I remembered him being a very polite and enthusiastic boy... and his sister..." Baelin's expression looked complicated. If Leylin had chosen to impart his knowledge to Longbottom, everything would have been different.

Aaron noticed Baelin's indecision. "Lord Baelin, Longbottom is now a traitor to humanity, a destructive person who is masterminding a rebellion. You need to draw the line, and capture him yourself!" he advised.

"That's right! I can tell that the large conspiracy in the central region involves many rank 2 Magi, and they will show their strength during the competition. You need to defeat Longbottom there and thwart their plans to save humanity!"

Vinas sounded incomparably resolute. She believed she was now walking the path of ancient heroes and was working hard to protect the harmony and stability of the human race. There was an aura of piety about her.

"I understand..." Baelin smiled wryly.

Somewhere else, Longbottom had also obtained this information from Ernis.

"A competition for young geniuses? A pageant for the Magus world? Many rank 2 Magi and protectors will even appear there as judges?"

Upon hearing this, green light shone out of Longbottom's eyes, "This truly is a great opportunity to finish everything in one fell swoop!"

Ernis was silent as he felt two powers other than his own in the river of

destiny. They would surely meet at the competition.

“Is it finally here? The final victor shall be me! Only I will be able to train in Sacred Flame till the peak and become the ruler of Twilight Zone!”

Ernis roared in his heart, though he looked calm on the outside.

“Send down the orders. All sections are to halt all activities and enter stealth mode, preparing for the upcoming competition. Also, inform the matriarch that I need support. Powerful support!”

Ernis respectfully bowed his way out upon hearing Longbottom’s orders.

Longbottom’s aura had become an enigma. After absorbing the essence of a rank 2 Magus, his strength had soared so high that Ernis could not tell the limits of his strength.

“Leylin, Baelin! Everything shall be settled there!” Longbottom mumbled, and the large phantom spider figure became more solid, as if becoming real.

.....

Time passed, and news of the central region holding a competition for young geniuses spread like a hurricane to all four corners.

There was only one requirement for entry; all participants needed to be below 50 years of age. The rewards were very generous; not only were there great amounts of precious resources and research to be won, the top thirty could freely enter a guild of their choice. The large-scaled guilds in the central region all provided a few places, and there was even a small rumour going on that the Guardian of the Realm would meet the champion and take them on as their disciple!

All of Twilight Zone was elated. Many young wandering Magi, and even guild geniuses, all left their stations and headquarters to head to the central region.

Many of them cared little for both the resources and the opportunity to join a guild, but apprenticeship to a rank 3 Magus was a temptation they could not resist.

Leylin expected this.

The plan was accepted as soon as Logan reported it. The Magi of the council were definitely smart enough to see the benefits of such an event. They even decided to make it a recurring thing, to ward off such troubles permanently.

However, even Leylin was initially surprised that the Guardian of the Realm would announce such a thing. It led him to make a few guesses.

“Looks like the Guardian of the Realm doesn’t have much time left. I just don’t know if the inheritance is meant to draw out the malefactors, or is sincere.” Leylin touched his chin.

However, he was very optimistic towards all this. With it, the competition would be even more popular, and work even better for his plans.

Those so-called ‘genius Magi’ probably brought with them forces of destiny. Though they could not be compared with Baelin and Longbottom, when they were all added together, the sum was not something that could be ignored.

Chapter 370: Response and Countermeasure

The dark elves were rather quiet in this period of time.

Although they had managed to take over the north, navigating through territorial disputes with the dwarves and gnomes consumed most of their energy.

Hence, although central Twilight Zone was under immense pressure, the situation seeming dire, all they had to deal with till now were a few scouts and wandering riders.

Balanced on this razor's edge, the central region had still remained peaceful. The preparations for the competition even made it seem like it was flourishing. As more and more Magi rushed over, it had gained fresh blood and increased strength.

After seeing this, Leylin suspected this was another intention of the war council. They wanted to attract more Magi over to increase their fighting strength

.....

In a shady swamp.

A toxic purple fog permeated the place, the rotten sludge concealing the bones of various darkness beasts. Occasionally, a few three-eyed crows would caw as they flew past, which was jarring to the ears.

In a dimly lit cave.

The walls were lined with spells that made them impermeable to the sludge and fog.

A black-haired old man was running his hands through the hair of a young Magus, his touch containing affection. "My child! In the ten years you've been here, you've learned everything I have to offer. Now, you are free to explore..."

"Gom has brought back some information. The holy land for us Magi,

the central region, is holding a competition for young geniuses. Not only can the champion obtain great rewards, they can even meet with the Guardian of the Realm, a rank 3 existence. What's more, they could even get the opportunity to become his inheritor..."

"A rank 3 Magus?" The youth, who had until then not looked in the least bit serious, suddenly turned solemn.

"Yes. You are the most formidable genius I've ever seen, and I believe there are few who can match you in the entirety of Twilight Zone. I believe the victor shall be you, though I'm afraid I won't get the chance to see it..."

The old man sounded slightly regretful, and his hands halted in mid-air.

His originally smooth and tight skin began to age rapidly, layers of wrinkles forming as if an old branch that had lost all its moisture. His black hair gradually greyed out.

His body withered at a rate that could be seen by the naked eye, ending up a dried corpse.

"Master? MASTER!" The young Magus was dubious as he looked at the master who had always accompanied him.

Thud! The old Magus turned into a withered, dried black corpse.

Poof! The youth bumped into the Magus' arm, and the corpse turned to dust in front of his eyes. Ashes spread out, leaving a complete set of Magus robes on the bed.

The young Magus was dazed, and only recovered after a long while.

Even if Magi could manipulate the radiation of energy particles to obtain a longer lifespan than regular humans, there was still a limit.

Even with dangerous modifications to the body, Morning Star Magi could only extend their lifespans by a few decades. It was difficult to succeed, and could cause Magi to end up with a strange, terrifying appearance.

This old Magus' life energy had been exhausted, and he had reached the end of his life.

Regular rank 1 Magi, those that were not of ancient branches like Warlocks, had 200-year lifespans. This old Magus had lived for a very long time, and had not advanced in his meditation technique. His time was now up.

“Master!” The youth stood there silently, images of the times he spent with his master flashing across his mind. A long while later, he turned and left.

Rumble! After he left, the earth caved in, forming a void that allowed the surrounding sludge to enter.

“Master, don’t worry! I will definitely be the glorious victor!” The youth swore to the heavens, and left without hesitation.

As he left, a tear fell from the corner of his eye.

.....

“The family’s honour is in your hands.”

In the southern region, in an ancient Magus’ castle.

Dim rays of light fell on a long, rotten table. This black wooden table was about ten metres long, and extended from the head of the hall to the door.

On the tablecloth, there was a silver lampstand and all sorts of fruits and delicacies. A few figures were seated sparsely around it.

The old woman at the master’s seat, who wore a black high-hat and multiple red gems and emerald rings, was giving a young girl a reminder.

She was silent for a while, and then spoke resolutely, “I understand, grandmother.”

Only she knew that, under the cover of luxury, this family was already waning.

The wooden table was already rotten, and the castle had not been repaired for decades. Even their defensive spell formations were deactivated due to a lack of magic crystals. Among the aristocratic Magi, they were basically a joke.

The silver lampstand and delicacies at this table, too, had been gathered with some difficulty. The ornaments on her grandmother's fingers? Fake trinkets! The originals had long been pawned off.

The girl was silent, knowing that in order to raise a Magus like her, they had paid a large price.

"I'll definitely become the victor of the young Magus competition and revive the family!" She vowed.

"Good! Let us drink to Lilina's promise!" The old woman laughed and raised her cup.

"Cheers!" The rest of the relatives all cheered and finished all the alcoholic drinks in their hands. After, they pounced on the delicacies on the table.

Even though they were the descendants of a Magus family, fruits were not things they could have often!

Upon seeing this, the old lady had a bitter expression. This caused Lilina to be even more resolute in her convictions.

.....

In the faraway northern region of Twilight Zone.

Groups of human slaves were tied up with thick ropes, and herded towards a city.

There were countless humans, and the one similarity between all of them was the shared expression of despair and numbness.

All of them were originally people of the northern region, but after it was attacked, they lacked the time and strength to move and all turned into slaves.

They would be lucky to be enslaved. Most captives only had one choice, which was to become offerings to the various matriarchs!

At the highest point of a city built in corundum, an absolutely beautiful dark elf maiden was staring on coldly.

“Human’s reproductive ability is too powerful. Their population is tens or even a hundred times ours! How should we rule them? The only way is to kill them until they are fewer than us or to the brink of extinction. Then we wouldn’t have to worry about any instability.”

A command that was cold, detached and inhuman was produced from her lips.

Behind her, elite dark elven secret guards drew back respectfully and passed down the order, resulting in the formation of a red sea.

What was more terrifying was that the corpses of these humans would be recycled to be used as army provisions for the gnomes, dwarves and even dark elves!

“How is it going with the Underground Winter Spider Emperor?” She asked indifferently.

“Through investigations, we can confirm that the mother body is not dead, and we’ve also appeased our elite knights. However, in the holy land, the disappearance of the mother body’s aura is still causing a disturbance amongst the Underground Winter Spiders.”

Another matriarch with a gold crown on her head in black leather revealed a great amount of skin as she bowed and reported.

“Trash!” A cold glint flashed in the maiden’s eyes, “Sacrifice the original head guard of the holy land!”

“Yes!” The icy intent behind those words caused the matriarch behind her to quiver.

“That mere human dares profane the holy land of us dark elves? We need to use his flesh and soul to scrub off this humiliation!” The maiden vowed.

“My lord, here is the newest intelligence from Longbottom!”

At this moment, the door opened. A dark elf shrouded in translucent black muslin held a brass circular cylinder and knelt, offering it to the maiden with both hands.

The girl laughed slightly, and a slight wind blew the cylinder over to her hands.

After seeing the letter, she bit her lips, her reddened lip providing a stark contrast to her pale skin, causing the guards around her to gulp.

“A genius competition in the central region?” She muttered to herself again and then ordered, “Gather the matriarchs. I to convene a meeting of Dark Nobility!”

She felt that this was a turning point that could give her the chance to take care of the Magi in the central region in one go.

However, she had a sense of extreme danger from the will of the darkness.

After pondering over this for a long while, the maiden sighed and decided to put this question up for discussion.

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After news of the genius competition spread, the entirety of Twilight Zone and even the surrounding dark elven, gnome and dwarven empires all responded to the news.

All sorts of Magi, regardless of race, hurried towards the central region.

In that moment, there really seemed to be a sense of instability.

Leylin, who was meanwhile waiting for the fish to bite, patiently waited for the competition to begin. As he had been the person to suggest this and was plenty strong himself, he was able to get a position as a judge.

As for the people in Nature's Alliance? All of them had been sent off on miscellaneous missions.

As Leylin's number one subordinate, Iren was nowhere to be found every day, and nobody knew what Leylin had ordered him to do.

Chapter 371: The Competition Commences

The competition was to be held on the Walker Plains in the central region.

This place was close to the central city, so a few large-scaled guilds had branches nearby that could send out resources and personnel if anything unexpected came up.

The miraculous abilities of Magi ensured that it took but a few months to transform the heart of the Walker Plains into a vast field.

Before the competition started, a few Magi had arrived earlier to settle down and do business. Thus, a few fairs had sprung up on the outskirts. Many fairs merged together, forming a rudimentary Magus city.

If this competition could be pulled off without a hitch, given the war council's plan to make it a regular affair, the place could really become a new Magus city, even surpassing the cities of the other four regions.

.....

Waves of Magi surged in from all over the place and filled the area.

Seeing such a bustling scene, Baelin took a deep breath and pulled off his cloak, and then hastened as he rushed through a street.

He walked quickly, and after seven or eight turns, he arrived in front of a residence and knocked.

Ka-cha! The door moved slightly to form a narrow slit, and a pair of guarded eyes appeared. After realising it was Baelin, the eyes disappeared into the darkness and then opened the door.

Baelin turned sideways and squeezed in, not letting the door open fully.

It was a small room inside. The oil lamp produced a dim, flickering yellow light, while Aaron, Vinas and Memphis were all waiting quietly.

Memphis was in the worst state. Not only were there many black

bandages around him such that he was similar to a mummy, his ears had even been pierced through with a large nail, revealing a large hole.

“Hey, when can I free myself from this weird appearance?”

Memphis raised his hands with bandages wrapped around them, looking like a mummy as he protested.

As a former member of the nobility, he could not stand being low-profile.

Baelin furrowed his brows as he explained. “Wait a while longer. This place is being monitored using bloodline aura detection spell formations. Even if you’re siding with the humans currently, we can’t let the fact that you’re a dark elf be revealed!”

Vinas shot Memphis a glance, “Don’t bother with him! He’s just been restrained and wants to go out to breathe some fresh air. My lord, how’s the situation outside?”

Aaron gestured to show that he was listening.

“There are far too many Magi gathered here. I couldn’t find Longbottom and the others, so it’s very likely that he’s modified his appearance or is in hiding.”

Baelin smiled wryly, “Looks like we can only catch them during the competition!”

“Competition? Do you mean you’re planning to enter the genius Magi competition?” Aaron got the point quickly.

“Yes, that’s right. I’m only thirty years old, and Bio Boosters are considered a branch of ancient Magi. In that case, I meet the qualifications to enter!” Baelin laughed.

“Only in the competition will I have the chance to meet Longbottom and persuade him to turn back!” Baelin mumbled.

Vinas and Aaron, who knew that this child of destiny’s shortcoming of idealism was making itself known again, could only sigh.

Honestly speaking, this child of destiny was basically perfect, but his

flaw was in his kindness.

In Twilight Zone, kindness was the one thing that one could not have. Sooner or later, Baelin would pay the price for this.

Aaron and Vinas exchanged a glance, as if having made some decision.

Baelin was totally oblivious to this, still sighing for Longbottom.

In his memories, Longbottom had always been a good child. What had happened?

.....

At the registration point, a deathly pale Magus in green robes walked out.

“Hehe, Leylin, Baelin, I’m here!”

Longbottom’s appearance had undergone a huge change. His spiritual force had been suppressed till it was that of a semi-converted Magus.

On the Walker Plains, this level of strength was considered mediocre at best and not eye-catching. It was unknown what methods he had used to get past the detection spells at the registration point.

The youth looked to the centre of the competition area. Hatred, elation, and an emotional struggle all flashed by his expression, before they disappeared.

He quickly took his coat and used his hood to conceal his face, disappearing into the crowd.

Leylin could somewhat sense the arrival of these people, but he could not be bothered with them currently. He was in his personal laboratory, an empty test tube beside him.

Threads of black liquid were still wriggling at the mouth of the tube, producing slight hissing sounds.

The Giant Serpent’s Breath potion. It was the fruit of his labour, formed from ten years of study, and with the help of Fendix’s hearts of Earthen Fiends, he was finally able to make it. Leylin turned green after he ingested

it, his aura dark and unstable. This situation continued for an entire night before he recovered.

Leylin glanced at his condition.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 2 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 22.5, Agility: 16.3, Vitality: 31.1, Spiritual force: 145.5, Magic power: 145 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force).]

“A standard Giant Serpent’s Breath potion can increase my spiritual force by ten points, and the other attributes also increase as well. Not bad! Based on this rate, after taking five standard Giant Serpent-Breath potions, I’ll meet the spiritual force requirements!”

Leylin looked at the numbers, his eyes sparkling.

Giant Serpent’s Breath potion was the culmination of his hard work in these ten years. With the ancient rank 2 Magi of Twilight Zone as the foundation, he was able to create a spiritual force potion suitable for Warlocks.

With the aid of this potion, he was confident that the estimated 200 years given by the A.I Chip could be shortened.

“The requirements to become a rank 3 Magus is to raise spiritual force till the 200 mark, and then completely solidify it!”

These were the two requirements for Magi to advance, and neither could be overlooked. Warlocks also had specific requirements pertaining to their bloodline.

Leylin laughed, raising his hand. A thread of bright silver spiritual force shot out from between his eyebrows. Like a mischievous little snake, it wriggled lively between his fingers.

Though it was only as fine as a strand of hair, this thread held within an immense energy.

The solidified spiritual force of a rank 2 Magus was something lower ranked Magi were unable to comprehend.

All spiritual forces that had not reached this level would be smashed

through in a direct clash.

Hence, rank 2 Magi were usually capable of crushing lower-ranked opponents. This was also one of the reasons why rank 2 Magi could lead.

“Amongst rank 2 Magi, to appraise the extent of solidification of spiritual force, one needs to look at how deep the silver colour is.”

Leylin muttered. After gathering numerous high-grade meditation techniques and with the simulations by the A.I. Chip, he was extremely clear on what he was supposed to do to advance.

“At the early stage of solidification, spiritual force is a light silver. At the middle stage, it will become more concentrated and become silvery-white! At the peak stage of the solidified spiritual force, it will be a bright silver!”

After reference to countless other meditation techniques, Leylin had broadened his perspectives and progressed at a rapid pace in his own.

He smiled lightly as he peered at the light silver spiritual force in his hands, and produced a thought.

This bright silver spiritual force danced in the air, attracting energy particles of various elements and formed spell models of various shapes, and then disappeared back between Leylin's brows

“I've completed all my homework on the solidification of spiritual force, and my manipulation of it has reached the peak.”

Leylin evaluated his own strength. Through ten years of settling down and working towards rank 3, he had accumulated a lot. He had even touched the boundary of rank 3, and even Logan, the Protector of the East, was no longer in his sights.

“With my current strength, I'm probably the furthest ahead amongst rank 2 Magi. With the bonus from my bloodline, I'm basically matchless within rank 2!”

With the help of the A.I. Chip, Leylin was very confident in his strength.

“But there's still ways to go before I can handle rank 3 Magi!”

At this point, the ones capable of causing Leylin fear were only Anya, the

dark elven Empress, the Guardian of the Realm, and the remaining few rank 3 Magi.

“No matter what it is, this competition is tied to my own advancement, as well as my choices and conjectures about destiny. It must proceed smoothly, even if a rank 3 Magus were to attempt to stop it !”

Leylin made up his mind, eyes sparkling.

.....

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Multi-coloured fireworks exploded into the air, various spell lights and tassels forming gorgeous images in the sky.

The genius Magi competition held in the central region had begun magnificently.

The competition area was similar to the ancient Roman colosseum.

With support from magic, this construction was much larger than the ancient roman one. It was big enough to hold tens of thousands of Magi.

At the heart of the colosseum, tens of individual arenas had been created. The young Magi who were participating would first begin with the elimination rounds.

“How boring.” Leylin and the eight other rank 2 Magi sat on the platform which had the best seats, doing their jobs as judges.

Though Leylin was seated here, he had long since gotten annoyed by the host’s speech. The only reason why he was still sitting here was because he was forcing himself to do so.

As for the other few rank 2 judges, they looked just as bored.

The battles at the beginning were usually not very intense. The Magi were lowly-ranked, and most were level 3 acolytes. With a competition of this level, it was more than enough for peak rank 1 Magi to watch over them.

Hence, Leylin and the others were bored to death.

Chapter 372: Fire Scorpion

Luckily for Leylin and the other judges, they were rank 2 Magi and had a very high status. Even if they were discontent, the audience did not dare show this on their faces, and instead placed their attention on the competition going on.

Leylin's eyes brightened at this moment.

Following his gaze, there appeared a person he was interested in on an elevated stage at the southeast corner.

"Arena 34, the fifth round of the selection! Here are participant numbers 273 and 35!" The announcer was a peak rank 1 Magus dressed in formal Magus attire, his hair perfectly combed.

Almost at the very moment his words ended, a line of fire flashed, and a beautiful woman with a great body arrived at the centre of the stage.

This female Magus had voluptuous, sexy curves and had intentionally worn tight clothing, her chest bursting out of the seams of her clothes. However, she looked a little young, as if she had yet to be of age.

This angelic appearance and devilish, arousing body immediately garnered the interest of the audience.

"Oh, I remember now! She's Fire Scorpion of the western region. She actually came here!" A Magus blurted out, and through many layers, the voice entered Leylin's ears.

"Fire Scorpion?" Leylin was slightly flabbergasted at this nickname.

"Haha, has Magus Leylin gone to the western region before?" Also on the platform, a rank 2 Magus laughed after hearing Leylin's voice.

He had a white cloth wrapped around his head and his pupils were blue. This was the typical style of the western region in Twilight Zone.

This Magus was the leader of a large-scale guild in the western region.

Though the central region was the main essence of Twilight Zone with many highly-ranked Magi, they could not take up all the spots for judging.

It was necessary to hand out a part of the seats to Magi of the four other regions.

“Fire Scorpion is rather famous at our side, and it’s said she’s rather ruthless. She even killed a few of her husbands, which earned her nickname as the Fire Scorpion!”

Without waiting for Leylin’s answer, the rank 2 Magus continued, “AWFctually, if not for her specializing in fire magic, we would definitely call her the black widow!”

“No, I just hear about her occasionally.” Leylin shook his head.

What he was focusing on was not Fire Scorpion, but her opponent.

With the impatient looks of the judges on the platform, the opponent who was late had opened up a route for himself and entered the arena.

This was a youth in green Magus robes, a sinister look in his eyes.

“Hmm, this youth?”

Before Leylin could speak, the rank 2 Magus was already surprised.

“What is it? Do you know him?” Leylin asked with a smile.

“Yes! The Magus in green robes is another formidable character known in the western region— Green-robed Carl. How unexpected that they’re matched together in the first round!”

The rank 2 Magus also from the western region sighed lightly, as if finding it a pity that these two geniuses were matched so early.

”Green-robed Carl?” Leylin was laughing inside.

Rank 2 Magi were very sensitive to auras. Whoever they met with, if left with a deep impression or memorable aura, the next time they met, it would be difficult for the other parties to conceal themselves.

For this reason, the Magus was confident in his judgment.

However, through his mole, Ernis, Leylin spied on his opponent.

Yes. This Green-robed Carl was, in reality, Longbottom in disguise.

Through the lingering spirit in the notebook in Ernis' hands, Leylin had watched in high definition the real Green-robed Carl being killed by them. He watched as they then skinned the man and, using special musical means, used it to transform Longbottom's appearance.

What was even more wonderful was that Ernis had no idea that he was unwittingly leaking information while he was hell-bent on working for the dark elves. Hence, for any spells that could sense and test one's thoughts, there was no reaction at all, which allowed him to survive.

At this moment, the A.I. Chip sounded.

[Skin Covering spell model has been completely analysed. Inputting into rank 1 spell model database!]

This Skin Covering spell was what Longbottom used to deceive everyone. Though it was only at rank 1, mysteriously it was able to trick even rank 2 Magi.

In addition, this spell did not originate from Twilight Zone, but rather, from a hidden inheritance of the dark elves. No Magi would expect this.

It was a pity that Leylin knew this beforehand, which caused their hard work to be in vain.

Even this spell model had been intercepted and taken by Leylin in secret and, with the A.I. Chip, completed.

If Longbottom knew this, he might really spew out blood.

Leylin had a sick interest in this but held it in.

Sometimes, the fruits of victory would taste better when waited for.

"Who do you think has the larger possibility of winning?" All these thoughts passed through Leylin's mind, but he still continued the conversation with the rank 2 Magus.

"Hm..." The rank 2 Magus muttered to himself and decided, "Though Carl's corrosive spells are renowned, and he possesses a middle-grade magic artifact, Fire Scorpion is a decade older and thus, has accumulated a decade more of experience. In addition, fire energy particles are capable of

restraining corrosive-type energy particles, which is very remarkable.”

“I think differently. Perhaps that kid called Carl can really create miracles!” Leylin laughed lightly.

“Oh? Can you tell me the reason?” The old Magus looked interested.

“About that, please let me keep it a secret.” Leylin rejected with a slight smile.

“You...” The old Magus laughed as well, but gave more attention to arena 34.

Meanwhile, Longbottom who had transformed into Green-robed Carl, was feeling terrified. “Damn it, a rank 2 Magus’ gaze swept this location quite a few times. What is it that piqued their interest?”

He quickly considered, “I previously gained much information regarding Carl’s habits, and I’ve even secretly grasped his signature spells. The Skin Covering spell shouldn’t have an issue, so what went wrong?”

“No, it’s possible that there’s nothing wrong. It’s just that my battle with Fire Scorpion has attracted their attention! After all, this is still the start. It’s very rare that two official Magi get matched together at the start.”

Longbottom racked his brains, considering it from all angles. If Longbottom knew everything had happened only because of Leylin’s sick sense of humour, he might really get so mad that he would collapse.

This careless attitude of his had obviously enraged the opposing Fire Scorpion.

“Carl, you dare underestimate me! I’ll make you pay the price!”

Fire Scorpion was so furious that her face was flushed red, her chest quivering and shaking her breasts, which caused the surrounding Magi to hiss in excitement.

“Fire Scorpion!” Fire Scorpion shouted under her breath, and quickly began to chant in broken sentences and syllables.

Traces of bright red energy particles converged, forming large numbers of little scorpions crawling out from the ground and surrounding

Longbottom.

“Rain of Corrosion!” Longbottom chanted in a low voice.

Droplets of green rain fell from mid-air, and every time the droplets made contact with the ground, a faint sizzling sound of corrosion could be heard even as white gases were being formed.

After the white gas disappeared, a deep hole was seen on the ground.

Those fire scorpions were even more pitiful. Clustered raindrops were inclined towards them, and in no time, they had all turned into a pool of pus-like liquid.

“It’s appeared! Green-robed Carl’s Rain of Corrosion! It’s an omnidirectional attack with no dead angles, with an offensive power of up to 40 degrees!” A Magus of the western region who had his head wrapped shouted excitedly.

Whether it was the corrosive raindrops or the fire red scorpions, the moment they reached the boundaries of the elevated stage, they would immediately fall apart due to the layer with translucent defensive ripples, turning into pure energy particles and being absorbed into the spell formation.

This was a defensive and absorption spell formation that was set up under every stage to limit the damage range to within the stage.

“Flames of Rebirth!” At this moment, Fire Scorpion’s expression showed her confidence in prevailing.

With her chants, a blue fireball suddenly appeared and exploded in front of her. The small blue flames dispersed like starlight and fell into the liquid on the ground.

Rumble! Rumble! Rumble! Like flower petals, blue flames blossomed on the ground, and fire scorpions crawled out once more, spitting threads of fire.

“Rain of corrosion!” Longbottom yelled once again, corrosive raindrops falling.

“It’s useless!” Fire Scorpion shot out a spark and revived the red scorpions that had fallen.

“I have more spiritual force than you, and the spell ‘Flames of Rebirth’ absorb 50% of the energy I’ve expended from using spells. With such a fierce consumption in our competition, you’re definitely not a match for me!”

Fire Scorpion attacked and did not forget to hurt her opponent’s morale with her words.

“Damn it!” With the increase in red scorpions, Longbottom’s activity scope had been reduced to a corner of the stage, and he looked about to fall off.

“If I didn’t have to worry about those rank 2 Magi, I would use my true strength! With just one hand, I can drain you till you become a dried-up corpse!”

Longbottom thought mercilessly. “I can only use that.”

He punched his hand deep into the ground, and traces of black liquid appeared from within his arm and entered the surface of the ground.

“Gushing Dark Springs!” A black corrosive fluid first appeared under Longbottom’s fist, spreading in all directions like a ripple.

The red scorpions were drowned by the black fluid.

Though Fire Scorpion was expending all her effort on employing ‘rebirth of the flames’, the fire scorpions that were resurrected were still swallowed up by the black spring.

After seeing this, Fire Scorpion turned deathly pale.

Finally, the moment the black fluid was about to cover her body, she raised her right arm, “I admit defeat!”

“Hmph!” Seeing this, Longbottom had to give up all thoughts of pursuing the matter despite his unwillingness to do so.

Chapter 373: Finals In The Secret Plane

“He actually used up all his spiritual force and formed a corrosive attack able to cover the entire area of the stage!”

The old Magus beside Leylin was astonished as he touched his beard, “Looks like Carl has improved quite a bit! It’s a pity that with this method, too much spiritual force is consumed. He’s destined not to succeed in the next selection battle!”

“That might not be so,” Leylin laughed and pointed in a direction, “Look!”

“Oh?” This rank 2 Magus looked in that direction and laughed, “He actually used a precious spiritual force restoring potion? Such a thing could save his life at a crucial moment!”

In a corner, Longbottom’s hands trembled and he almost flung out his potion bottles.

“Again! Again!” His expression darkened.

Leylin snickered in his heart. His own gaze was now at a stage where Longbottom could not discover it, so he constantly attracted the attention of the rank 2 Magi beside him to the fellow, giving him a lot of stress.

Having teased him enough, Leylin did not want to shoot himself in the foot and directed the attention of the rank 2 Magi away. “By the way, are you interested in visiting my laboratory after the competition ends? Nature’s Alliance’s special fish is somewhat effective for rank 2 Magi...”

At another end, Longbottom sighed, “Then again, Green-robed Carl’s original strength loses out to that of Fire Scorpion. Though I tried to conceal it, I still attracted attention. I’ll need to be more careful in the future...”

“My apologies, please let me pass!” At this moment, a Magus squeezed in, looking hurried.

“What are you doing?” Longbottom pushed the other person away.

The two were suddenly caught in a daze.

Though they had disguised themselves, Longbottom was still able to recognise Baelin at first glance, while Baelin had also recognised his former buddy.

The two of them stared at each other, but because of some unspeakable reasons on both ends, they silently swallowed their words. They did not attempt to expose each other's identities.

"Number 188! Number 188!" At another end of the stage, the judge was starting to get impatient.

Baelin's body trembled and he hurried on. "I will stop you!" he said softly when passing Longbottom.

"I'll wait and see!" was the immediate reply.

As match after match went on, a few geniuses made a name for themselves, resulting in the adulation of the audience.

Leylin had also picked out a few people. "Lilina from the western region, Haylon of the voodoo marshes, and then Baelin as well as Longbottom and their friends and subordinates will take up the top few spots in this genius Magi competition."

With his knowledge as a rank 2 Warlock, he easily found those so-called 'geniuses'.

Usually, these geniuses would be considered the 'main characters' of the era and were important figures in history. However, such influence was nothing compared to Leylin!

"The champion should be either Baelin or Longbottom." Leylin concluded.

"They really are the converging point of Twilight Zone's forces of destiny. Their strength has risen by so much, and I believe these two have even touched the boundary of the rank 2 realm."

Leylin sighed in awe. With this rate of improvement, even Aaron and the other 'fake' geniuses he had made with his grandpas, leave alone Lilina

and Haylon, were left in the dust.

The preliminaries were very quick.

By nightfall, about half out of the numerous contestants who had signed up had been eliminated. Numerous Magi became familiar with some of the great battles here, and some were even turned into videos and supplied to large-scale guilds to pick from.

Baelin and Longbottom, as well as the other contestants that Leylin had thought highly of, had not failed their missions. They passed through the preliminaries, and even earned themselves a reputation.

Amongst the Magi at the competition area, they had become somewhat famous.

“Haylon!” “Lilina!” Carl!” and the like finally reached the ears of rank 2 Magi.

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“The forces of destiny have converged further!”

While resting that day, Leylin proceeded to a luxurious room that was especially prepared for him and looked out the window at the sky.

In this short period of rest, many events were unfolding.

In a contestant’s room, a few black-robed Magi were threatening Haylon from the voodoo marshes, “If you see our young master tomorrow, you must forfeit! If not...”

“Scram!” Haylon raised his eyebrows.

“What did you say?” The few Magi were instantly enraged.

“I told you to scram! Didn’t you hear clearly?” Haylon stood up, his eyes now completely red.

Black and red rays of magic exploded from his body.

“There are Magi from large-scaled guilds monitoring this area. You dare-”

These Magi evidently did not expect him to be so stubborn and irritable.

The moment there was a difference in opinion, he attacked without hesitation.

Rumble!

Several rays of magic burst in the rooms, the stray ripples surging and shaking the surrounding walls till they turned to powder.

“What’s going on?” A group of Magi wearing the patrolling uniform rushed over. They represented the dignity of the organisers and were backed by many rank 2 Magi. Since they had such powerful backers, they naturally confident.

The few black-robed Magi exchanged glances and everyone saw the helplessness in their eyes, “Please!”

Meanwhile, they had a deep hatred for this person who was ruining their plans and could not understand the situation.

The youth seemed to sense something and gazed into the distance, revealing for the first time a hint of grief within.

“Seizing the championship is Master’s dying wish. Anyone hindering me from achieving it will die!”

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Under the dim yellow light, Lilina looked at a blue pearl in her hands, seeming undecided.

The light blue pearl was smooth, round and beautiful, with little flecks of gold that formed the image of a palm at the heart of the pearl.

This was the last treasure of her family. However, it also held within it horrific side effects, which was why Lilina was feeling hesitant.

She then thought about the sacrifice of her family, and their current condition.

Though their family was a Magus family, resources were not so easily obtained in the Magus World. With all hopes of revival left to her, her shoulders were weighed down by far too much pressure.

"I must become the champion and lead my family on the road to revival!" Her expression turning resolute under the lights, she pressed the blue pearl to her forehead.

Sssii! The pearl merged into her forehead.

A smear of deep blue began to flicker on Lilina's body.

.....

"My lady!" Longbottom removed his disguise and gazed at the human figure within the black mist, kneeling deferentially.

"En! Little Longbottom, though you are beginning to carve your own route and have almost reached rank 2, the accumulation that happens with time cannot be overcome so easily." A charming female voice sounded from within the black mist.

"I will now condense all the life force essence of my race onto you in order to help your Life Absorption meditation technique truly break through to the second level."

"Many thanks, my lady!" Longbottom looked ecstatic.

In his mind, he instantly recalled the figure sitting on the platform. "I've finally, finally caught up to you! I really want to see the expression you'll have on your face... Leylin!"

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"What are you thinking about?"

Aaron watched Baelin, who was standing aside.

"No... It's nothing. I saw Longbottom, and he's changed so much..." Baelin sighed, looking worried.

"Listen to me, Baelin! Longbottom has now completely sided with the dark elves and will cause bring chaos to the human race. Your mission is to stop him. You cannot forget this!" The expression on Aaron's face became serious.

"Yes, I will stop him!" Baelin repeated, strengthening his tone of voice.

Days later.

With the Eternal Light spell as well as strength of the Sun Stones, the area was illuminated.

A Magus wearing the attire of a host first bowed towards the platform, and then announced the schedule for the competition.

“All of you are the best who have gone through round after round of selection! A victor will appear amongst you today, and the top thirty will have the opportunity to choose a guild to enter! This includes any large-scaled guilds...”

The moment these words left the host’s mouth, the area was filled with an uproar.

The hundred or so remaining contestants’ eyes revealed different emotions. There was passion, contemplation and excitement.

Cough! The host coughed lightly, and the area fell silent.

“The competition shall be held here!” He pointed at the stage right in the centre.

A giant spell formation had been set up atop the stage, while crimson runes were spread around. They emanated a strange light that caused one to shudder in fear.

“The finals of the competition will be held in a secret plane. You will be sent to a random location in the secret plane, and there is only one way to win. Defeat your opponents and obtain the points on their amulet!”

The host raised a milky-white amulet that was only the size of a finger with a simple number written on it.

“In the secret plane, there are no rules. Besieges and usage of external items is allowed.”

“I would like to remind all of you that even though we will install a spell pattern that will teleport you out the moment you are at the brink of death, there are always accidents. Hence, there is the real possibility of death in the secret plane, and I want you to consider this carefully.”

The host spoke indifferently, and a bloody smell assaulted the nostrils. Baelin was surprised. With this lack of rules, it was easy to slip up. Even with the aid, it would be difficult to keep one's life.

After all, the mysteriousness of magic could not be surmised by the regular person. Perhaps there were methods that could forcefully break the life-saving methods the organisers had set up and cause a large number of deaths.

Chapter 374: Clash

Although the host talked about potential dangers in the finals, nobody drew back.

The world of magicians was no paradise. Those who managed to survive this rat race had seen blood time after time again, and were well prepared for such a situation.

The generous rewards that the large-scale guilds offered and the chance to become the inheritor of a rank 2 Magus had convinced them to bet their lives on this competition.

“Good! Since nobody’s backing down, let the finals begin!” The host waved his hands.

Peng! Peng! Peng! Three giant fireworks flew across the sky like colorful comets, and the music reached fever-pitch.

Buzz! Purple energy condensed into the spell formation, constantly increasing its strength until a hole was ripped open in space.

The finalists stepped forward one after the other, receiving their amulets and spell formations before they disappeared with a flash of light.

After the last of them entered the secret plane, a giant curtain of light was formed around the competition area. Their figures blinked onto the curtain, each contestant occupying one of the dozens of square partitions.

They were monitoring every inch of the secret plane, which surprised many of the Magi present.

“Such a clever monitoring technique, and so expensive as well...” Leylin murmured to himself.

He, too, could develop a technique to monitor the whole plane, but it would cost too much.

Even with the leadership of the joint conference and the sponsorship of several large-scale guilds, they could only maintain this technique for a day or they would go bankrupt.

But the result of ignoring such costs and using this technique was rather good. Nearly every contestant could be seen on the screen.

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“Something’s wrong!” Baelin said as he brandished his cross blade.

A sword wave streaked across the air, chopping a giant leech into two. However, the two halves didn’t die instantly. Instead, it writhed in the mud and splashed water all over the place.

Being attacked by this leech the moment he was teleported into this marshland gave Baelin a bad omen.

“Be careful, master. I sensed a powerful monitoring ability here!” His armour split apart to reveal an eye. The Bio Boosting armour was communicating with him.

“It’s the Okell’s Great Observation Spell from the Plant affinity, which uses the roots and vines as transmission channels. If you want to act in secret, my lord, you must avoid any places that have plants in them” it said to him in his mind.

As a Bio Booster, Baelin’s gains from inheriting the Bio Boosting armour of an ancestor was not limited to a significant boost in strength. Having the armour with him was like carrying around an old grandpa who would help him with his knowledge and experience.

“No wonder I feel uncomfortable, we are being watched!” Baelin nodded, and left the marshland quickly.

Just when he reached the edge of the marshland, Baelin heard something and pointed his cross blade at the bushes nearby. “Who’s there? Get out!”

“Don’t! We mean you no harm!” Two Magi stepped out who were similar in appearance.

“Lord Baelin, we were just teleported here.” “We are only trying to help any Magi who have fallen into swamps!” “Also, Lord Baelin, we admire your strength from the bottom of our hearts. How could we dare to harm

you?”

“Yes! Yes!” The twin Magi spoke one after the other without pause, leaving no chance for Baelin to say anything himself.

In fact, Baelin’s power with his cross blade and fleshy armour left deep impressions on the competing Magi. The respect of the very Magi he once feared left Baelin feeling quite smug.

“Lord Leylin should feel satisfied after watching this scene! In fact, Lord Leylin was on the judging platform all this while. Maybe I should find an opportunity to talk to him...”

Baelin venerated his Master from the depths of his heart. Not for a moment would he suspect Leylin of being the traitor among the upper circle of Magi. Had he not been stopped by Vinas, Aaron, and Memphis, he would have gone to Leylin’s mansion the moment he’d arrived.

“Haha...Haha...” Baelin stroked his head embarrassedly, a smirk on his face.

Seeing this, the twin brothers glanced at each other, a strange look flashing past their eyes.

“Lord Baelin!” One of them said as he approached him, “Since this place is so dangerous, how about we stick together?”

Pang! Just as he finished his words, several green brambles stuck out of the earth, tying Baelin’s feet up.

“Now!” he shouted.

“Profound energy blast!” The younger brother standing behind him crushed a crystal rune. Together with a chant, a powerful attack was launched.

A ball of purple liquid, filled with corrosive white bubbles, rushed directly towards Baelin’s head.

The twins had gathered intelligence about the awesome power of this armour, so they had aimed instead at Baelin’s unprotected head.

The twin brothers’ co-ordination was perfect, and their final strike

reached an offensive power of around 60-70 degrees! Such an attack could even corrode mountains.

“Haha! Stupid! Even if you are more powerful than us, this is a competition! Why wouldn't we take a gamble?” The elder brother laughed, looking at Baelin with a little excitement.

He was not pleased when Baelin stole the limelight, and this chance for vengeance made him happy.

“Master!” The second before the corrosive liquid ball arrived, eyes arose from every parts of Baelin's armour.

These eyes were smaller, but they blinked with wisdom. Now, they were showing signs of rage.

Pang! A membrane of flesh formed like a helmet around Baelin's head, protecting it.

As the profound power blast hit the membrane, Baelin's body was launched backwards. But weirdly, not a drop of blood flew out.

While Baelin was still in the air, his armour changed significantly.

Flashy membranes hardened to form real armour, and the dozens of eyes merged into thirteen big ones that were scattered along it. This terrifying appearance, was the most powerful form of the Bio Boosting armour.

Bzzz! The purple corrosive energy still attacked Baelin's body, but it was nothing in front of his armour. There wasn't even a tiny depression formed.

This fact stupefied the twin Magi. They looked at each other, and immediately came to an accord. “Run!”

Magi who could defend against a joint attack of theirs were far more powerful than they could handle. They did not want to be thrown out this easily.

“You!” Baelin was about to blow his top, and jumped forward in a rage.

Crack! Pits were formed under Baelin's feet as his jump landed him in

front of the twins in an instant.

“Die!” Baelin raised his cross blade. Baelin’s strength was already at the peak of rank 1 Magi, approaching the boundary of rank 2. Once he made up his mind, it was easy to kill mere semi-converted Magi like them.

Pup! The cross blade ran through the neck of one Magus, then a light came out of his body.

His body was covered by a milky light column, and disappeared immediately.

“You go along with him!” Baelin took no pity on them this time, and shoved his cross blade into the other’s heart.

Peng! This one disappeared into the white lights as well.

After killing the twin brothers, Baelin took a milky amulet out of his pocket.

Beep! After a flash, the number in this amulet turned from 1 to 3. Baelin stared at this in a daze, a wry smile on his lips...

Outside the secret plane, in the middle of the arena.

A light column burst out, an indistinct figure inside it.

“Quick! Medicine!” The host ordered with experience.

Several Magi dressed in milky robes with the symbol of a snake and cross rushed around.

After the light dissipated, the Magus who was eliminated first showed up, his face pale and the wound on his neck bleeding.

“I will stop bleeding first, prepare the life spell!” The medical team consisted of healing Magi, several of whom emitted energy fluctuations at the peak of rank 1.

A milky light bathing him, the wounded Magus was cured and the wound on his neck disappeared.

A second later, his younger brother was also sent out, and the medicine team took care of him as well.

Up in the platform, what happened just now was seen by Leylin, but he had an impulse of cover his eyes.

“Very adaptable, but still stupid! It seems that the years of exile and adventure taught him nothing. Fortunately, I didn’t tell anyone that I taught him! What an embarrassment...”

“Look! Haylon and Carl ran into each other!”

“The stars of the competition meet, this should be a good show!” Some Magi smiled gloatingly.

Chapter 375: Teaming Up

Leylin turned his attention to another screen.

In the sky above a verdant forest, Longbottom, disguised as Green-robed Carl, had run into Haylon.

These were two favoured dark horses had a large possibility of gaining victory. This immediately attracted attention.

Many contestants had already been eliminated in a short period of time. With fewer participants remaining, the remaining screens had increased in size.

.....

Within the secret plane.

“Green-robed Carl?” Haylon glanced at the strange youngster in front of him.

“I’d originally wanted to skip the trouble of defeating you guys one by one, and had decided to wait to make a move and harvest a large number of points at once, but forget it. I’ll make an exception for you and take your point right away.”

Longbottom looked at Haylon in front of him, a sinister smile on his face. Now that he was getting closer to the goal, he did not have to disguise himself so carefully. His opponent’s identity as a genius made Longbottom, who had been born a commoner, feel a sense of disgust.

“You seem to hate me?” Haylon’s brows furrowed, “It’s alright, anyone who obstructs my path shall die anyway!”

“Jeje, who do you think you are!” Longbottom laughed weirdly, and released part of the bindings on him.

Cold! Powerful!

A berserk wave of spiritual force swept across like a hurricane.

“Peak rank 1?” Haylon’s expression that had always been as cold as ice was immediately smashed through.

Longbottom's 'burst' had also caused a frenzy outside the plane.

"Peak rank 1? I remember Green-robed Carl is only forty-five years old, right?" A judge wearing reading glasses asked a Magus behind him, "Fano, when did you reach the level you're at?"

The Magus by the name of Fano was an old geezer with a white beard. He looked ashamed as he spoke, "Your subordinate is ashamed. After training hard on the Icy Throne for 70 years, I reached this realm at 115 years old."

"If he studied on his own, this Carl really is a genius!" This judge raised his spectacles, "Run checks on him. If there's nothing wrong, we can consider enticing him into entering our guild."

Leylin, who was also on the judge panel, saw that many of the other judges had sent down the same order and couldn't help but laugh inside.

If this was a few days ago, they might be able to find out about Longbottom, but now? By the time they had run their checks, Longbottom might already have achieved his goal. What use was it then if they found out?

"You're already at the peak of rank 1!" Haylon blurted out, unable to maintain his indifference any longer.

"This is the expression! This is the expression!" Longbottom chuckled aloud, "I want those people who look down on me to realise how wrong they are!"

He laughed crazily, flushing red as if he were sick.

"You're crazy!" Haylon's voice became cold, and large numbers of silver-white light blades appeared from his robes, swirling in formation.

"Go!" Haylon pointed at Longbottom, and the many light blades formed a dense mesh and tried to pull Longbottom in. Meanwhile, he turned into a black shadow and disappeared into the sky.

"You overestimate yourself!" Longbottom snorted coldly, a layer of green mist surging forth.

Tss tss! Great numbers of silver-white light blades entered the mist and immediately produced sounds of corrosion, dissipating one by one.

“Come here!” Longbottom’s right hand became a phantom image and reached deep into the air.

Next, a black shadow was pulled out from the surrounding space.

Haylon’s expression was that of disbelief. “That’s impossible. This concealing technique is my master’s special technique! How could it...”

“That strong aura of life on you betrayed you!” Longbottom explained, his expression showing his disdain.

Meanwhile, Haylon went limp, as if this was a huge blow to him.

“Kid, you’re very luckily. If we’d met earlier, you’d long since have turned into a corpse, but now?” Longbottom halted his intentions of using Life Absorption and turning him into a dried-up corpse.

This was still within the secret plane, and he was being monitored by the Magi outside.

If he hid his true strength, he could pass it off as being exceptionally talented or having gained some inheritance. Whatever it was, Twilight Zone was huge and it was no surprise to have some fortuitous encounters.

However, Life absorption was a dark-elven meditation technique. If it was exposed, the competition would be halted, and he would be faced with several rank 2 Magi who would combine their efforts to kill him.

“But I really don’t want to just let you off!” While lifting Haylon, a smile appeared about Longbottom’s lips.

This smile was enough for Haylon’s hair to be raised, and he immediately thought of using the spell pattern for escape. However, it was too late!

A green light sword ripped through Haylon’s forehead, and with the corrosive force invading, he could only cry out miserably.

“Ah...” Amidst the painful screams, Haylon’s body was bound in light pillars and transported out.

Longbottom took out his own amulet and saw the number rapidly rise to thirty, and revealed a satisfied expression. After closing his eyes for a short while, he began to hurry towards another location.

Thud! Outside the secret plane, Haylon's body fell to the ground, large amounts of black blood flowing out of his orifices.

"His mind has been damaged! Quick, get Master Dojek here!" The healing Magus who came over took a look and quickly shook his head.

A moment later, Dojek narrated something to Leylin and the other committee members at the judging area.

"His sea of consciousness has been destroyed? There's no cure?"

"Yes, Haylon's sea of consciousness has completely been destroyed by a corrosive spiritual force. There is no way to restore it. At most, I can only save his life. From hereon, he can only live on as a commoner..."

Dojek's expression was dim. Haylon truly was a genius, but he had not realised that no matter how amazing the genius, they could fall before they truly matured.

However, his long life had allowed him to experience much, and with a sigh, he left.

Leylin and the committee members had a brief exchange regarding the issue, before they promptly tossed this matter to the back of their minds.

The final competition carried the risk of death! Just crippling a Magus wasn't much.

What they were more interested in were the methods Longbottom had used to heavily injure Haylon before he had been transported out.

"It seems to be a combination spell. By instantly transmitting large amounts of energy particles to destroy the composition of the sea of consciousness..."

There was a flash in Leylin's eyes.

He felt that after large numbers of geniuses had fallen in this competition, the force of destiny shrouding the area had become richer till

the extreme.

The surging river of destiny was like a giant gunpowder warehouse. With just a little spark, it would explode violently.

“I didn’t expect the three of them to meet. Time for a good show!”

Right after, Leylin realised something else and changed his focus to a screen at a corner.

“Based on the guide of destiny!”

Three voices sounded in unison, with both male and female voices.

Aaron, Vinas, and Ernis who were all training in Sacred Flame, the geniuses Leylin had created himself, finally came together.

If anyone had been focusing on these three Magi, they would realise that after entering the secret plane, they had not fought with any Magi and instead, had been hurrying forward.

Just as they were about to encounter enemies, they could predict and evade them.

Hence, the three somehow passed through half of the secret plane and met at a corner on the plains.

“It’s the first time we’re meeting in real life! I’ll introduce myself. My name is Ernis!” There was a smile on Ernis’ face. His gaze swept past Vinas and Aaron, and stayed on Aaron’s ring and Vinas’ multi-coloured necklace for a long while.

“Aaron!” “Vinas!”

“Are you going to repent for all you have done?” Aaron asked, standing with Vinas.

Though they were competing against each other, he and Vinas were on the humans’ side, and had no good feelings towards Ernis of the dark elven camp.

“I’m just used to looking at issues from a different point of view!” Ernis laughed, obviously not wanting to say more.

After all, there was a large group of Magi watching. How could he expose himself?

“Then die!”

Just a moment before, they had speaking nicely, and in the next, Aaron immediately became hostile and attacked.

A silver cross blade hilt appeared in his hands, and was only a third as long as a regular cross blade. It had lost its sword blade and point, but a sharp energy fluctuation burst out from it.

A ray of light streaked through the air, bringing about with it numerous ripples and aimed at Ernis.

Ernis seemed to have predicted it and dodged, looking delighted at the sword hilt in Aaron’s hands.

“So you’ve forged it too! I won’t have to conceal anything anymore.”

A silver-white slender long sword tip appeared in front of Ernis. The sharpness it emanated was even above that of Aaron’s attack.

“Go!” Ernis pointed at Aaron, and great amounts of silver light shot out from the tip of the blade.

Formless ripples collided with the silver light and quickly dispersed, as if nothing had happened.

However, the surrounding grass had become much shorter, cut through smoothly as if it had been sliced through in that instance by some light.

“This is it. All devious plots are useless to us. All we can depend on is solely strength to fight it out!”

Ernis yelled, his sword tip flying into his hands and shooting out great amounts of light.

Seeing this, Vinas sighed and retrieved a silver-white sword blade from behind her back and besieged Ernis with Aaron.

“Hmm?”

The Magi outside suddenly made sounds of astonishment.

“These three middle-grade magic artifacts have reached the peak. Also, why does it feel like the sword hilt, sword blade and sword tip can be combined to create a magic artifact with more power?”

Chapter 376: A Clash Of Destiny

“These three are definitely high-level artifacts, to the extent that they can be combined to make a magical weapon!” The Rank 2 Magus sitting beside Leylin guessed.

“I think so too!” Leylin smiled and nodded, his gaze secretly heating up.

In the center of the secret territory, three silhouettes continuously collided fiercely, and the glowing radiance emitted by the magical artifacts in their hands destroyed the meadow around them until it was unrecognisable.

“Kill!”

Aaron and Vinas looked at each other and exerted their spiritual force to its extreme so that the silver sword flew towards Ernis.

“Battle Chain!” At that moment, a different expression flashed across Ernis’ face and a black chain covered in black runes flew out from his chest, covering Aaron and Vinas.

“You really thought I was so foolish, eh? One person against the two of you?”

Upon seeing the chain, Ernis finally had a smile on his face, indicating that he had achieved what he had wanted.

“This is the secret weapon of the Haylin Guild. It can bind two semi-elemental Magi for at least 10 seconds. I had never thought that this Magus would be in possession of it. The others will definitely lose!” Some of the Magi outside secret territory could recognize this evil object.

But soon after, they were struck agape.

They only saw Vinas smile indifferently. Another “Vinas” appeared from the center of her body, and the other Vinas, one with a stern and firm aura, charged towards Aaron.

Among the flickering light rays, Aaron, who was bound by iron chains before, was now floating in mid-air and the Vinas-doppelgänger replaced

him.

“Quick! Now!” said the two Vinases. The constantly tightening iron chains made the defensive runes on Vinas’ body shatter one after another.

“Doppelgänger! Using a doppelgänger to be free from the binds of the chains? This is actually very worthy of study!” a Magus said while stroking his white beard.

Aaron, who saw Vinas vomiting blood, was somehow enraged and charged forth towards Ernis.

It was obvious that Ernis, who was trying to restrain the binds of the chains, had used up a huge amount of his spiritual force and magical power, and was thus unprepared to deal with Aaron’s sudden attack.

Aaron’s eyes turned red. Drawing the sharp end of his sword, he held the sword’s handle and pierced Ernis’ chest.

But Ernis did not summon any escaping spell and only had a weird expression on his face, as though he was crying and laughing at the same time.

“What happened? Is there something wrong with the spell? Extract him!” a Magus immediately commanded.

But the characteristic white light had not appeared yet.

“Sigh...” Ernis coughed out a huge amount of blood.

“You...You’ve won!” Ernis said as he struggled.

“What? Why aren’t you escaping?” Aaron asked. He found this all extremely hard to believe.

“Tsk tsk! Why do I have to escape?” Ernis’ facial expression changed, as though he had changed into a completely different person.

“Don’t... don’t kill me!” Soon after, a dreadful expression shadowed Ernis’ face.

But following the huge loss of blood, the expression gradually disappeared. And everything eventually returned to its original state.

“You need.... Need to be careful of the black hand behind. My brother, I saw.....”

Ernis shuddered and gave the long double-edged sword and calligraphy pen to Aaron. His eyes suddenly turned white and without finishing his last prophecy, he lost his life's aura.

Peng! Ernis fell to the ground.

Kacha! Aaron felt a mysterious energy emerge from Ernis' body and enter his own as Ernis died. The Sacred Flame rapidly swirled, as if it were absorbing something unknown from his body.

Soon after, he broke through the semi-converted elements and finally achieved the position of a peak rank 1 Magus. But he was not happy at all.

“Let's go,” said Aaron, as he helped lift Vinas, who was seriously injured, and disappeared among the milky, white light beams.

The day's events had been thoroughly confusing for him, so much so that he no longer held any interest in the final showdown between Baelin and Longbottom.

Outside the secret territory, Leylin touched his chin as he pondered deeply.

“Schizophrenic symptoms are getting more severe. Signs of benevolence, viciousness, weakness and other personalities along with intense suicidal tendencies are being exhibited! This experiment is a failure! Even if one is alive, it's no use!”

He appeared regretful as such thoughts passed through his head.

Soon after, he then turned to the last screen and said, “Let the first fated confrontation start!”

In the center of the secret plane, a majority of the Magi had already been eliminated. The only two to survive were Baelin and Longbottom, who, combined, had more than forty wounds on their body.

Furthermore, these two people were gradually getting close to each other, on the verge of converging.

“If no mishaps happen, the champion will arise from one of these two Magi. Let us wait and see!” The host excitedly declared as the screens on site constantly fused and finally, the two last huge screens were split respectively on Baelin and Longbottom’s side.

The two screens merged, as the two Magi walked closer towards each other. They were going to form a single large screen.

“We finally meet again!” The strong body armour on Baelin had 13 eyeballs with oddly-shaped cyclones on them, as though they were absorbing something from the surroundings.

“Can you stop me?” Longbottom, disguised as the green-robed Carl, sneered.

“Whatever happens, I must defeat you today!” Baelin firmly said with confidence as he pointed his crossbow towards Longbottom.

“Tsk tsk! You know what, Baelin? The more I see you, the more annoyed I get, ever since I saw you at Potter Town!”

At this time, Longbottom said to Baelin: “Why did Leylin choose you the previous time, and not me? What do you have that’s much better than me?”

“So you still do care about this!” Baelin’s expression darkened upon hearing all this.

The other Magi outside the screens looked doubtfully at the two Magi settle down without producing any energy waves.

“So these two Magi knew each other beforehand?” questioned some Magi as they exchanged doubtful looks.

Xiu!

And at this moment, the two Magi in the middle of the screen started moving.

Energy particles stormed forth from their bodies just like a gale, producing immense pressure and causing the airflow around them to reverse.

It was an uncommon sight to see two rank 1 Magi competing against each other in Twilight Zone.

Leylin, who understood and knew these two Magi, naturally knew that what they showed to the public now is far from their true powers.

Bang! Bang!

The green and red silhouette continued bumping against each other in mid-air so much that the air around them got compressed and exploded.

“I never thought that you can also enter the Rank 2 Realm!” Longbottom said to Baelin in the midst of the intense battle.

The Magi outside did not notice anything strange with Baelin and Longbottom’s first showdown between the screens. Although the energy waves were only at the peak of rank 1, only Baelin and Longbottom, who knew each other very well, could tell the terrifying capabilities of each other!

On top of that, they were able to control these abilities without the slightest spillover and maintained the facade of being rank 1. With this amount of strength, it would be a good showing even for a rank 2 Magus.

“Give it up now, Longbottom!” Baelin said as his willpower decreased a little.

Originally, Longbottom was not someone with such big aspirations and ideals. Furthermore, to even confront face to face with a friend he knew since young, he simply had no strength to do it.

“Give up? I’ll give up now!” With a fierce front, huge drops of green corrosive liquid started forming at Longbottom’s lower body, forming a whirlpool.

“Whirlpool of Death!”

Zila! But this was just the beginning. Longbottom tore open a scroll upon seeing strong energy particles being emitted, provoking the whirlpool to increase in size. This sparked the radiation of a dangerous aura, causing some rank 2 Magi to frown and disperse from the sides of

the whirlpool.

“It’s the scroll of a rank 2 spell!” cried out some of the Magi, standing outside the battlefield.

This sort of thing was so rare to see. Even if a rank 2 Magus were to create such things, a lot of time and effort is wasted and success is not even guaranteed. Thus, it is rarely seen in the marketplace. Who would’ve thought that such a precious thing will be in the hands of Carl?

Besides, was it even worth it to waste such a precious thing during this competition?

“To use a rank 2 Magus’ scroll for protection now, is it because he has to resort to using all of his strength in a split second?” Leylin said outside the battlefield as he chuckled lightly.

“If nothing untoward happens, the champion will obviously be our Carl from the Western Regions!” exclaimed the rank 2 Magus who had spoken to Leylin previously, as he stroked his beard with a hint of pride on his face.

“Not exactly!” Leylin shook his head. Baelin was a destined child, and he would not lose so easily.

“What now then? Do you want to bet with me?” the rank 2 Magus from the Western Regions immediately said. He was inwardly very worried as he remembered how he was previously defeated by the Fire Scorpion spell.

“No need! I do not have anything good to bet against you, Sir!” Leylin said as he forced a smile and shook his head.

“No worries, we won’t bet with money. Just a simple bet of the outcome!” said the Western Region’s rank 2 Magus.

Leylin nodded. He knew that these rank 2 Magi have already reached their limits of what they could achieve on the path to becoming a Magus. Thus, they focused all their energies on other areas such as upon younger talents.

This rank 2 Magus from the western region had previously won over

him. If Leylin did not win this time, he was afraid of the discomfort that will remain in his heart for a few years.

The enormous and brutal whirlpool continued expanding, like how a monster widens its mouth, and immediately engulfed Baelin.

Upon seeing this scene, Longbottom smiled.

“Die!” Longbottom suddenly charged into the middle of the whirlpool and came out holding a green sword handle.

Rumble! The 13 eyes on Baelin’s armour started staring and in the middle of the pupil, numerous fine-textured runes shot out, spiralling around Baelin’s body and forming a strange pattern.

The runes on the armour started evolving and radiated dazzling rays of brilliance. The whirlpool of death emitted huge ripples of corrosion, striking the armour. Yet, it caused no damage Pa! Pa! Pa!

Baelin roared and the entire whirlpool surprisingly broke apart. Longbottom was not prepared for the sword slash that was aimed at him.

Chapter 377: The Conspiracy Unravelling

"Ripple of corrosion!"

A green circular ripple immediately appeared before Longbottom, and shook continuously, as if it was trying to push Baelin out.

However, Baelin's face remained composed, and from his blade large amounts of vertical eye phantoms appeared.

"Bio Boosting armour and sword!"

The sword with the vertical eye phantom gave off rays of flames, and evaporated all the green ripples. With indomitable strength, it directly targeted Longbottom's right chest.

Blood flowed through the corner of Longbottom's mouth, and a long wound opened up on his chest. He flew through the air, and landed on the ground, giving rise to a long trail of blood.

Boom! The many soil layers behind him had piled up into a small mountain, and had finally offset the inertia in Longbottom's body, which had caused him to be unable to stop.

"You lost!" Baelin landed calmly in front of Longbottom, his emotions complex. There was no visible hint of joy or victory in his expression.

"I lost!" Immediately, Longbottom's face registered his defeat.

Cough! He violently coughed out a mouthful of fresh blood: "Bro... Brother Baelin, I have some things regarding my sister that I wish to talk to you about!"

"What about your sister?" Having heard Longbottom's familiar address, Baelin's heart softened. Moreover, Longbottom's sister was his first love!

Baelin could not help but lower his body.

"My sister, she... she..." Longbottom's voice gradually became softer, which caused Baelin to get closer to him.

"She wants you to die!" After seeing that situation, a hint of a maniacal smile flashed across Longbottom's face, and a crystal in his hands was

launched like a lightning bolt.

"Not good!"

Baelin's eyes widened, and he unceasingly flew backwards, his Bio Boosting armour continuously adding layers of defense.

But it was too late. A grey ray of lightning detonated in front of Baelin's chest, and smashed the milk-white talisman.

Boom! A pillar of light enveloped Baelin, and caused him to disappear from the secret plane in an instant.

Crash! Bang!

Baelin's figure appeared at the site of the competition, his face still registering shock and grief. He looked at the charred area above his chest and remained silent.

"Haha! Even though the tactics weren't entirely legitimate, at least I won!" The Magus from the west, who had bet against Leylin, immediately laughed loudly.

"That's right! You won!" Magi were not knights, and did not have to conform to a code of honour. Even though Longbottom's tactics were overboard, and he used whatever he could to obtain success, he was undoubtedly the champion! Leylin naturally had to recognise this point.

What was more important was that there was nothing wagered on this. To concede defeat was nothing much.

Leylin's attitude actually caused these Magi to feel embarrassed.

"Actually, the Magus that you thought highly of was strong too. Not only has he reached the level of a peak rank 1 Magus, he is walking the ancient path of the Bio Booster. If I am right, his armour was inherited from at least an ancient rank 2 Bio Booster. If we were to compare their true strengths, he would still surpass Carl"

"En!" Leylin nodded outwardly, but he did not agree with the claim.

Even though Baelin was strong, Longbottom was not a person to be provoked. A son of destiny just like Baelin, his most terrifying dark elven

meditation technique and other secret cards had not been revealed.

Of course, both of them had suppressed themselves for the sake of the Magi who were watching, and Baelin himself had concealed his trump card, the Underground Winter Spider Emperor. Were the two to have battled without considering the consequences, both parties would have equal chances of winning.

By now, Longbottom had finished off the remaining few Magi in the secret plane, dominating his opponents, and the host announced loudly, "The champion has already emerged. He is Green-robed Carl from the west! Let us cheer for him!"

"Carl!" "Carl!" "Carl!"

The Magi present instantly let out cheers of happiness, and welcomed Longbottom.

"What are we to do? Should we openly reveal his identity in public?" Aaron secretly communicated with Baelin.

"No! Not at all! He threatened me earlier on. Should we do so, he will immediately initiate his plot and bring huge amounts of casualties to the Magi present. Before we clearly understand what he's planning, it would be best not to do so!"

Baelin hesitated, and was seemingly indecisive.

Regardless of how they were communicating secretly, the process of the competition had been advancing bit by bit.

"Now, may we invite our champion and the other 30 Magi on stage, for our 9 most distinguished and high-ranked judges to give out the prizes..."

Along with the host's voice and cheers, a stage decorated with gold and silver, bedazzled with numerous rays started rising slowly from the middle of the site.

Other than Baelin, Longbottom, and a few other Magi who held other intentions, the 30 Magi who had obtained a high enough score walked up to the stage emotionally.

To them, this was the pathway to fame, the glorious road to success.

"Let's go. They are actually having us present prizes to them! What a bother, couldn't they just have passed down the prizes?" A rank 2 Magus from the west complained to Leylin.

"This is actually the important stage where budding Magi obtain credit due to their ambitions. Even though it's only a ceremony, it still has to be done!"

Leylin smiled and got up, and went to the golden stage together with the other rank 2 Magi.

"I, Victory, rank 2 Magus and guild leader of Glorious Sword, solemnly announce that this Magus from the west is the champion of this season's young genius talent competition!"

The rank 2 Magus standing in the middle announced, at the same time placing on Longbottom a golden crown encrusted with gems.

"Carl!" "Carl!" "Carl!"

Many Magi were cheering, and bouts of cheers got overpowered by other bouts of cheers.

"Other than obtaining the reward previously, Carl, you have the opportunity to choose a guild to enter! What is your choice?"

Victory had high hopes for Carl, and hence in his voice held a tinge of excitement and pressure, as well as feelings of enticement.

"My choice is obviously..."

Longbottom deliberately hesitated a while and then said, "It's obviously the Dark Elves, you idiots!"

"What?" The jaws of numerous Magi dropped open. They all thought they'd heard wrong.

"Not good, we have been cheated by him!" On the other side, Baelin's face immediately changed, the armour on his body once again surfaced. He had wanted to rush over, but unfortunately, it was already too late.

"Mud membrane!"

A layer of clay-coloured invisible film surfaced from Longbottom's body, with 9 rays of lights shooting out of his body, directly shooting at the 9 rank 2 Magi judges on the stage who had no time to dodge the attack.

Kacha! Kacha!

A deep blue ice layer immediately spread out on their body, and caused all 9 Magi to freeze into ice sculptures.

In the ice sculptures, the numerous rank 2 Magi had life-like expressions of anger or fear.

This sudden change had shocked all the Magi present at the site.

"Longbottom! What are you doing! Release Master Leylin now!"

Baelin suppressed the rage within, having seen the ice sculpture of the already frozen Leylin. He had originally wanted to undo his pretense here and give Master Leylin a big surprise!

Furthermore, from the bottom of Baelin's heart, he respected Leylin and had treated him like a teacher. Having seen Longbottom's actions, he instantly felt anger.

"Carl! What are you doing!" The face of the host on the stage instantly became more solemn, a ray of a peak rank 1 energy wave imploded from his body.

Boom! Boom!

2 rays of spells attacked the surface of an ice sculpture, yet it was entirely useless, and could not leave any traces on the crystal clear surface of the ice sculpture.

"There's no use, the matriarchs of the dark elves used one thousand years to extract this essence of the cold abyss. Even rank 2 Magi cannot be able to overcome it..." Longbottom's voice was unhurried.

"As for Leylin? I've wanted to kill him for so long! And now, he is finally in my hands. Do you reckon I would easily let this opportunity go by? Haha..."

Presently, Longbottom had removed all restrictions, and laughed hysterically.

Boom! A light ray flashed across, Longbottom removed the skin alteration spell on his body, and recovered his original appearance. At the same time, a strong and enormous energy was released from his body like the surging waves of the ocean.

"And this noisy crow, I've borne with you long enough!"

Longbottom lifted his hands and a dark silver spiritual strength exploded. The body of the host, not having time to react, exploded into a rain of flesh.

The Magi standing on the stage immediately retreated, with one of them shouting out, "Solidified spiritual force! Rank 2 Magus!"

"This is the leader of the revolutionary army, Longbottom! I saw his face in a picture once!"

"It's already too late. Attack!" Longbottom shouted.

Swish! Swish! Numerous shadows appeared all around the competition site, all tearing apart magic scrolls.

Dark clouds instantly enshrouded the area, and large numbers of tiny spiders were shot out of the dark clouds. The spiders spat out threads continuously, binding up the entire area in a short duration.

From a distance, the competition site that was enshrouded by a white silk wall looked like a giant cocoon.

Baelin's face dimmed, and the aura on his body exploded forth. He treated Longbottom as a rival. "So your target was not only the 9 judges but also all the Magi in this competition site!"

He was secretly shocked. Around 20% of the elite Magi of Twilight Zone were present at the scene, and if they were to all die here, it would be a terrifying blow to the humans.

"Kill!" At this point in time, the black-clothed men hiding amongst the crowd immediately took action, and many more spiders drilled their way

through the cocoons, surrounding and attacking the human magicians.

Large amounts of silk wove together into a formation, weakening the human Magi while channeling the strength to their opponents. Immediately, lights flashed and explosions occurred everywhere.

The obstruction made it impossible for the human Magi to escape. Some Magi, eyes turned red, fired off spells in all directions, adding further to the chaos.

Chapter 378: Channelling Of Lifeforce

“These aren’t just the people of the revolutionary army!” Baelin stared at the many black-robed Magi and his expression darkened.

“Haha... Of course!” At this moment, Longbottom had no more qualms. “The matriarchs of the dark elves have already infiltrated this area. Not long after, blood will flow, and the dark elves will rule the subterranean world!”

Longbottom’s face was slightly flushed.

“You lunatic!” Baelin roared, and charged at Longbottom.

“Life Absorption!”

Longbottom shouted, and a large phantom image of a spider appeared behind him.

Compared to the last few times, the image had become even larger and even held a terrifying aura. From the eyes of the spider, a very human light could be seen, as if it now held an intelligence of its own and had now become alive.

“Aru!” Baelin whistled for a while, and a gold phantom darted out from within a small crack amongst the spectators and dropped to the ground. Its figure suddenly increased in size, and in the blink of an eye, it was two stories tall.

This was a giant, golden Underground Winter Spider. The stripes on its body gave it a very elegant feeling, and the phantom image on Longbottom’s back kept snarling, as if its honour was being challenged.

“Underground Winter Spider Emperor! So you are really the sinner responsible for the theft of the sacred creature!”

The cold glint in Longbottom’s eyes expanded, and several greyish-green streams of air rose from his body.

“Ah!” “Ah!”

Two short yelps were heard.

These belonged to the two official Magi who were unfortunately struck by the stray streams of air. The moment they had contact with the greyish-green air, their bodies wilted and they turned into dried corpses that had died in an incomparably pitiful manner.

“You dare rob life force that does not belong to you. You’ll be devoured by it sooner or later!”

Baelin’s expression was dark as he rode the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, looking like a gallant knight.

“How would you understand how brilliant Life Absorption is?” Longbottom merely gave a cold answer to Baelin. Meanwhile, the giant spider phantom image pounced forward, the strange streams of air like black holes that greedily sucked in the life force within Baelin.

Baelin’s expression became grim as he patted the Underground Winter Spider Emperor he was on and collided with Longbottom.

The energy particles formed from the clash between two rank 2 Magi created havoc as they sent a few people unlucky enough to be hit by stray particles flying. They were seriously injured.

Within the greyish-green vortex, a knight on a giant golden spider was emanating red light. He looked like an ancient dragon-slaying prince as he charged towards the heart of the vortex.

The battle kept changing location and caused a few stages to be completely destroyed.

At this moment, the nine judges were trapped. The rank 2 Magi were already the most powerful in this entire competition area.

The result of Baelin and Longbottom’s match could even decide the life or death of all the Magi here!

Hence, even while battling with the revolution army and dark elves, many Magi tried to spare some energy and watch the battle.

What attracted their interest the most were the nine ice sculptures on the platform!

These Magi knew very well that a small part of their chances of survival depended on Baelin, while most of it depended on whether these rank 2 Magi could break out of their restrictions.

Even Longbottom would be reduced to dust under the combined attacks of nine rank 2 Magi.

“Cough! Wake up, my lords!”

At this moment, light flashed in a corner and a grey-haired Magus appeared.

He mumbled spell incantations, a huge blazing fireball striking the nine sculptures and turning the podium made of gold and silver into a sea of fire.

This Magus despaired as he saw the flames soon dying out under a layer of white frost. Dense icy mist lingered and froze the whole podium into ice and snow.

Meanwhile, not even a corner of the nine ice sculptures had melted.

“What a waste of energy. This is the icy air from the abyss and is a rank 2 spell which can be sustained for a long time.” Longbottom watched on and began to laugh coldly.

Without waiting for his orders, a few dark elf special guards in black-robos charged forward and began to battle with the Magus in grey robes. Not long after, a sharp dagger pierced into his chest.

After seeing this, the many Magi who had plans to rescue him all fell silent, putting away all thoughts of rescuing the judges.

Most of them wanted to break away from their opponents and successfully leave this place.

At this moment, the battles in the area became more brutal and intense.

Outside the competition area, everything had yet to die down.

Teng! Teng! Teng! Teng!

At the horizon far away, a black line suddenly appeared. It gradually

closed in and the two ends began to shrink, and it felt like the line would surround the whole competition area.

When the black shadows came closer, it could be seen that they were actually the elite Underground Winter Spider knights. There were a great number of dark elven Magi, which included multiple matriarchs and even Anya.

“Seal off that area and don’t let any human get away” Anya commanded, and then pointed at the cocoon in the middle, a gentle voice transmitted to every knight’s ears.

“Fight for Her Majesty!” “Fight for Her Majesty!”

The many dark elven Underground Winter Spider knights cheered and then began their attacks.

“Prepare for Joint Earth Pitfalls Spell! Begin!”

At this moment, brownish-yellow lights flashed and countless depressions appeared in front of the Underground Winter Spider knights. They were like long trenches, with earthen spikes piercing upwards and stopping the knights in their tracks.

There were a few knights who had moved too quickly and fallen into the trench, their chests, arms, thighs, and even faces pierced through like skewered meat. Those who had yet to die kept howling in pain.

Three figures appeared in mid-air, causing Anya to furrow her brow slightly.

“The protectors of the east, west, and south have all arrived. What about that old Guardian of the Realm?”

“I’m right here. I wouldn’t need you to worry about me!”

Green light flashed, and the the old protector appeared before Anya. Though he seemed weak and did not have much of an aura, Anya looked as if a great enemy had appeared in front of her.

“I didn’t expect you, Anya, to use the dark elves’ crown as a means to enter Twilight Zone without letting even the dark elven knights know

about it..." He smiled slightly while greeting her.

The crown of the dark elves was a sign of the authority of the Dark Elven Empire. It was also a very powerful magic artifact.

It had a very simple function, which was to conceal the energy aura of a large group of people and their mounts. The key point was that it could turn around the battle. However, every time it's used, it can only be used again after a fifty-year wait, which is why this inherited magic artifact of the magic elves could not be used flippantly.

Now, the dark elven crown could finally exhibit all its strength and shield numerous dark elven armies into the central region, almost wiping out all the Magi at the competition area.

"Except for the protector of the northern region who has died, all of the lord protectors are here. What's this? Do you want to stop me?" A little green vortex appeared above Anya's hands, glimmering with a mysterious light. It attracted the attention of everyone to look at the vortex, which had the intention of sucking human spirits in.

"Protecting Twilight Zone and the human race was our vow when we took on the role as protectors. This is an honour worthy of exchanging our lives for!"

The Guardian's face was filled with layers of wrinkles and he looked about to die of old age. However, his eyes still shone with light.

Anya sensed that, although the life force of the Guardian was like a flame that was sputtering out, it still emanated light and warmth that even caused her to be worried.

The allied Magus army appeared behind these few protectors confronted the dark elves.

"The plan was actually leaked out. Who was it?"

Anya's brows furrowed and then straightened out, "Whatever it is, we've finally restrained your nine rank 2 Magi. There are still many elite Magi and acolytes within the competition area. In other words, we have a sure victory in this war!"

“Attack!” Without waiting for the opposing Magi to finish their preparations, Anya immediately ordered for the dark elven matriarchs to attack.

With a flash of her body, she somehow disappeared from the air and, when she reappeared, she was in front of the Guardian of the Realm.

A fair palm brought with it a terrifying devouring strength and was pressed towards the old man’s chest.

“Floating Light!” The light in the old protector’s eyes became brighter and he exclaimed.

Numerous tiny rays of light surged out continuously and formed a protective shield in front of him.

The moment Anya’s hand made contact with the shield, a low sound was produced, and the ground suddenly trembled, the space even beginning to quiver.

“Old geezer, how much longer can your life force sustain you?”

Anya’s expression remained unchanging as she continued her attacks.

A tremendous vortex formed behind her, and any Magus that was sucked into it, turned into a dried corpse in an instant.

“Activating combination spell pattern!”

The expressions of the protectors of the other three regions changed greatly, and as if they had made up their minds. They headed into the skies, shooting out great amounts of green threads that connected with the Guardian of the Realm.

Tremendous rays from light force wrapped around him, and the next time he reemerged, he had already become a handsome and sunny middle-aged man.

If not for the familiar spiritual aura about him, nobody would recognise him.

As for the three other protectors, they began to age visibly.

“Good! Good! Good!”

Anya bit her lips. She could naturally see that the three rank 2 Magi were entrusting their life force to the Guardian. However, this meant that, after today, the four of them would have all their life force consumed and lose their lives.

Chapter 379: Fury Overflowing Through The Heavens

“All obstructions are futile! The dark elves will rule over Twilight Zone from today!” Anya mumbled, and a dark grey shadow extended from her back over the area.

Within the dark grey world, the plants and animals were drained of their lives, turning to ashes at a surprising pace.

“Wilting Domain!” Anya shouted in a low voice, and within the domain, a circle of grey light exploded from the bodies of the Underground Winter Spider knights, allowing them to be even bolder and fiercer.

As for the enemies that had been affected by the domain, they soon found their bodies aging and their life force disappearing.

“A false domain! Anya, from beginning to end, you’ve always been ahead of me.”

The protector who looked like a middle-aged man sighed, and then shot out large amounts of gold light that were like a giant sun.

The two domains collided against each other, and the air seemed to shatter, causing tremendous spatial distortions and then exploding.

On the ground, the Magi used the trenches as their first line of defence. However, the dark elves were still proceeding with their attacks. In that moment, the area was filled with the scenes of war.

The Magi spent all their energy here, and did not have any to spare to break the giant cocoon and save the others.

The large white cocoon was standing proudly, and even if magic were to brush past it, it remained unharmed, displaying its immense defensive ability.

Even if there were stray streaks from the battle between the rank 3 Magi causing it some harm, there would be multiple little spiders crawling up and spitting out threads to patch it up.

Such a powerful regenerative ability caused the Magi within and outside the arena to feel despair.

“Haven’t you found it yet?” Vinas glanced at Aaron.

They now had their backs against each other. Parts of the silver-white Meteor Sword floated, withstanding the attacks surrounding them from the Magi of the revolutionary army, dark elves as well as countless little spiders.

The situation on the battlefield was what Longbottom’s side intended it to be, and it was progressing in a way that benefited them.

Not only were the nine strongest rank 2 Magi restricted, many people from their own side had also snuck in. Under the unexpected attack that nobody could have responded to in time, many Magi died in their comrades’ arms.

In addition, within the competition area, Longbottom had also arranged for something.

“Not yet!” Aaron smiled wryly, “Longbottom’s conspiracy is too complex. He actually used himself to draw our attention, and left the key to the battle on the battlefield itself.”

He brandished his sword hilt, and great amounts of sharp white lights severed the threads in the air.

“It’s very difficult to identify these threads, which are spread out all over the area. The moment they wind around the body, they will consume spiritual and magic force, which is used to complement the running of the spell formation! To break this spell formation, we need to find the very center of it!

“But I can’t see it in my predictions!” Aaron’s expression was incomparably dark.

“Grandpa Merlin, what’s going on?”

“Seems like an even more powerful Magus is using the power of destiny to conceal the important part. To be able to hide it from your prophecies,

it must be a powerful person, at least at rank 2. I even suspect it could be a rank 3 dark elven matriarch personally doing this!"

Grandpa Merlin's voice was serious.

"Then we can only search one by one at the places where energy converges?" Aaron's expression was serious.

He suddenly raised his sword towards the right.

Weng! White light blades streaked through the sky, and a dark elf's face showed his disbelief as he was slashed into two. The badly damaged corpse fell to the ground, large amounts of fresh blood and multi-coloured intestines flowing out.

Chaos! Aaron thought that this was utter chaos!

Many Magi of the revolutionary army, dark elves, as well as summoned creatures all battled in the giant area, and there were even a few Magi secretly taking revenge on their rivals. These bloody battles caused the situation to become even more chaotic.

At the very centre, Baelin was riding the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, he and Longbottom in the middle of the final showdown.

The energy from the battle between the two rank 2 Magi overflowed everywhere, and the surrounding Magi automatically avoided them.

Not far from the battlefield, nine ice sculptures stood tall. Despite the stray waves from the battle between rank 2 Magi, none of them were in the least bit hurt, creating a stark contrast between them and the complete disorder in the surroundings. There was even a circle of dried corpses around them, and they were the Magi of Twilight Zone who had wanted to secretly unseal the rank 2 lords.

"Even with an ancient inheritance and an Underground Winter Spider Emperor with the strength of rank 2 as your magical pet, you still can't win against me, because trash will always be trash!"

At this moment, the rank 2 battle was nearing its end.

Longbottom's face was filled with black gas, and the phantom image of a

spider behind him rushed into his body.

“Ah!” His expression began to distort.

“All living things disintegrate, and return to earth!”

A great dark chilly aura shrouded the area and it became deathly quiet, as if they had entered apocalypse.

Longbottom was suddenly like the grim reaper, dancing with precise steps as he strolled to Baelin’s front.

“Seal!” With a palm strike, Baelin was sent flying while coughing blood, and he then stood atop the Underground Winter Spider Emperor’s head.

Chi chi... The Underground Winter Spider Emperor Aru made sharp sounds that could be of fury, or terror.

Immediately after, it saw Longbottom produce a black metal bottle with a thin mouth aimed at it. A feeling of an imminent catastrophe filled its heart in that instant.

“How dare you fail to appreciate the matriarch’s kindness! The great Matriarch couldn’t be bothered to deal with you, which was why she got you to stay in the holy land and be a sacred creature. How dare you betray your own race!”

Longbottom looked pleased at that moment, especially when he saw the urgent expression on Baelin’s face as he spat out a few more mouthfuls of blood. Feeling like he had wreaked vengeance on Baelin, he was especially thrilled.

Threads of little runic chains extended from the mouth of the bottle and then covered the body of the Underground Winter Spider Emperor.

“Aru!” Baelin yelled hurriedly. Through the long time they had gone on adventures together, he had long since considered Aru a companion he could trust. Now that it was gradually being sealed, he was extremely anxious.

Pu!

In that moment, however, he suddenly collapsed and spat out a huge

mouthful of greyish-green blood.

Longbottom's power full of perishing and withering had invaded his body, and was continuously devouring his life force.

In this situation, even the Bio Boosting armour found this a thorny issue and without more time, it could not dispel it.

Baelin could only watch as Alu's body shrunk until it was sucked into the metal bottle.

"Did you see that? This is what happens to all that have helped you before, whether it's Leylin or this Underground Winter Spider Emperor!"

Longbottom's voice was clear and cold as he sealed the bottle and then kept it in his bosom.

He unhurriedly walked to Baelin's front, "How is it? Are you unable to move? My Death Decay isn't so easy to withstand!"

Boom! He gave Baelin a flying kick, pushing him tens of metres away, his face dragging and forming a giant trench.

Even with the protection of the armour, Baelin also flushed red and then paled, and what followed was the sound of bones breaking.

The Bio Boosting armour also produced a groan, indicating it could not bear this.

"Wh-Why?"

Baelin looked at Longbottom, gritting out the words through his teeth.

"Why?" Longbottom went forward and stepped on Baelin's face, pushing his head deep into the ground.

"You're asking me why?" There was a sinister smile on Longbottom's face.

"Why were you the one chosen by the Baron? Why were you the one to work at Blazing Hammers? At the end, why were you the one chosen by Leylin?" Longbottom snarled.

"So-So you still minded all these..." Baelin coughed and was stepped on

once again ruthlessly, taking a mouthful of soil.

“Exactly. I minded all this, but it doesn’t matter to me now!”

Longbottom began to laugh maniacally. “The Magus Leylin who looked down on me, and you, who has been snatching away my opportunities, are now lying like dead dogs in front of me! I once swore that I would make anyone who scorned and humiliated me pay the price, and now, both of you are left. Let me see, should I first take care of Leylin or you... Oh, right! I heard you have a wife, right? I heard it’s a missus born in nobility. Don’t worry, I’ll take care of her well.”

“You-You dare...”

Baelin was so furious, the veins on his face popped up, but he was then stamped on viciously.....

“What do I do? The child of fate is now fated to lose!”

Aaron struck and fended off the attack of a dark elf, but there was also an injury from a corrosive spell. The corroded flesh was constantly expanding.

“In the prophecies, I do not see any hope of him turning the tides!”

“There’s definitely hope! It is every Magus’ power and duty of Twilight Zone to look to the light in the darkness. Humans of Twilight Zone will definitely survive, and the glory of Magi will remain eternal!”

Behind him, Vinas muttered, and a misty-eyed look appeared in her expression.

“What’s going on? Did you predict something?”

Aaron was startled, and he sensed the person beside him collapsing.

“What’s wrong?”

Aaron immediately turned back, and what he saw caused his eyes to widen.

Vinas lay down weakly, and there was a sword tip glimmering with silver light in front of her chest. It had already pierced into where her heart was.

“You...you... why? I’ll treat you right now!” Aaron felt two bouts of heat flowing below his eyes.

“No! Don’t!” Vinas extended her hands filled with blood and resolutely stopped Aaron.

“Only by my death and allowing Sacred Flame to unite, as well as gathering all the parts of Meteor Sword, can you put up a fight with Longbottom!”

“No, no, no! There must be a way! There must be another way!” Aaron’s hand trembled, and he began to roar.

Chapter 380: Baloney

“Don’t be silly!” Vinas laughed weakly as she reached out and caressed Aaron’s face.

“Sacrificing me, a single person, will allow you to save the entirety of Twilight Zone, what’s there to hesitate?”

At the present moment, although her lips have gone pale and chapped from the loss of blood, her face remains full of radiance and it hurt Aaron to see her like this.

“No! You’re doing this for me! You’re doing this for me!”

Advancing to the second rank did not ensure that he could match up to Longbottom, but it would at least greatly increase his chances of escape.

Aaron wept, tears flowing down his face uncontrollably.

Vinas laughed, her tone full of gratification “This impermanent fate! We were destined to be enemies, yet we fell in love... with each... other”

Bang! Vinas’ palm fell listlessly.

Shortly after, a strong current of concentration, along with a warm and gentle scent, was injected into Aaron’s consciousness.

Sacred Flame started to revolve quickly, causing Aaron’s aura to rise sharply, and he broke through the bottleneck of a rank 2 Magus.

Snap! Snap! Snap!

The three parts of Meteor Sword assembled together, emitting bright silver rays, and from the light, a tall and thin sword shaped like a cross slowly appeared. The aura of a high-level magic artifact, also much closer to the level of becoming a magic weapon, spread out in a powerful manner.

“AAAAAAAHHH!!!!”

Aaron roared as he lifted the Meteor Sword and he transformed into a long arc as he charged into the midst of the battlefield.

Any magi who obstructed the path, be they from the Twilight zone or from the Dark Elven Empire, all faded into the air under the power of the Meteor Sword.

“What’s the matter?”

In the middle of the battlefield, Longbottom stared at the huge incoming arc. With fierce eyes, he stopped toying with Baelin. A fireball aimed right at his head hit him.

Pew! The Meteor Sword released a ray of light, accurately targeted at the attack launched by Longbottom.

A great and powerful wave of energy surged forth like raging waves.

Although at this moment Longbottom could still kill Baelin, he would definitely suffer huge amounts of damage.

“Rank 2?” Longbottom’s pupils froze. Energy at this level, in addition to a high-level magic artifact designed for offence, was a great threat to him.

As such, Longbottom made a choice. Without moving his body, his quickly moved backwards, layers of grey-green protective shields formed in front of his vision.

“Kill!” In the middle was Aaron’s silhouette. At this moment, as he charged forward with the mighty sword, silver threads of spiritual force continued to condense onto the arc, causing the sharpness of this high-level magic artifact to increase exponentially.

Bang! Bang! The protective shield set up by Longbottom was torn apart like crisp paper, and the blade of the sword even touched Longbottom’s eyes.

“Are you trying to kill me? With just you alone?” Longbottom had a sinister expression on his face, and the shadow of a spider appeared on his body, with its mouth wide open, claspings directly on the long sword.

Snap!

The sound of a slight explosion rang in the air, following which, the silhouette of two people flew away, retreating.

Longbottom stroked his face, as below his left eye, a stream of blood flowed.

Whereas on the other end, Aaron's arm produced a bone crunching noise as he quickly retreated to where Baelin was.

"You... are you alright?" Baelin finally expelled the Corrosive spell's energy left by Longbottom within himself and he stood up.

Although he did not witness the previous scene, he felt that the expression on his friend's face was not right.

"Your strong armor has been damaged! Use this!" Aaron glanced at Baelin. He then passed the cross-shaped sword in his hand to Baelin. "The energy it can display in your hands will be much much greater than what it displayed in mine"

Now was not the time for idle talk, Baelin immediately took over the Meteor Sword, but the deathly stillness in Aaron's eyes still frightened him.

"This again! This again! Why is it that everytime I am about to succeed, there will always be more obstructions sprouting up?" On the other side, Longbottom observed this scene with a grim complexion.

"So what? Having one more rank 2 Magus does not change anything! You will all die here today!"

Longbottom roared. The phantom spider on his back suddenly did something unpredictable.

It ruthlessly widened its mouth and plunged its sharp incisors into Longbottom's shoulders.

Strings of red which were visible to the naked eye was extracted from Longbottom's body. And the spider image on his back grew redder and started to expand.

Although Longbottom's body continued to become thin and weak, leaving only skin and bones, which looked terrifying, the energy in his body was increasing exponentially, as though there was no limit.

“Dark Elven Ritual of Life! We cannot let him complete it or he will advance into the peak of rank 2, even though he will have to pay for it with his life...”

Aaron’s voice grew hoarse, but he immediately transformed into a silvery arc as he rushed at him.

“Old friend Aru! This time I will not hesitate and be benevolent. Just you wait, I will save you!”

Baelin gripped the Meteor Sword tightly. This melee weapon, when in the hands of a powerful warrior, also let out a deafening screech.

“Kill!” Baelin had a face of determination. The eye on his armor opened once again, and a huge restrictive aura suddenly arrived at the site, aimed at Longbottom who was in the center.

“Haha... Come! Come!”

Longbottom who had a stick-thin figure laughed wildly, and engaged Aaron and Baelin.

Bang! After the ritual of life, not only did his aura increase, it seemed to have experienced a transformation, allowing him to gain a huge boost.

He raised his bony right arm against the Meteor Sword in Baelin’s hands.

Bang bang! The two came into contact, letting out a horrifying sound of metal brushing against metal. The Meteor Sword in Baelin’s hand could only cut the skin on Longbottom’s hand, following which it was blocked by Longbottom’s arm which was stronger than steel.

“Huh!” Baelin face was full of shock, he chopped another time, but the long sword that pierced Longbottom’s face was stopped by his teeth clenching hard.

“Sacred Flame!”

Aaron pointed at Longbottom, a wave of pure white blaze laced with threads of silver fell, causing the area around Longbottom’s body to burn.

Longbottom’s Magus robe, rings and accessories were all melted in the

blazing fire but his body remained intact, just like sturdy metal.

“What is happening?” Jumping on this chance, Baelin finally drew out the long sword, standing up with Aaron who had retreated to a corner.

“The Ritual of Life has begun, and at this point his life does not belong to him, it belongs to the noble Mother of the Abyss. Simply put, the source of his life has been transferred and his body is only a puppet now. Whatever harm we inflict upon his body won’t have any effect.”

Aaron’s face turned serious, with a hint of frantic “But his ritual of life has not been completed, so the core should still be in the process of transferring, later I will control and mark him, take care of the rest!”

“Got it!” Baelin nodded “How are you going to...” he could not finish talking before Aaron madly dashed in.

“Die!” Longbottom watched Aaron charge towards him, his eyes full of vengeance and violence.

He abruptly sent out a fist. The black fist collided with Aaron’s chest, letting out a crisp sound.

Snap! Longbottom’s face suddenly changed and he retracted his fist. On his knuckles, a bone had already been pierced through and strands of black solidified blood could be seen.

“Wh...What’s happening? How can an ordinary Bone Piercing Spell take down my defenses!” There was a huge change in Longbottom’s expression, and he seemed to have thoughts of retreating.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

But it was too late, Many silver bone piercings started to come out from Aaron’s body, and his eyes turned white. Surprisingly, he was able to predict Longbottom’s retreat route. After dodging his long range attack, he clung onto Longbottom.

“Ah! Ah! Ah!”

Several bone piercings acted like a trap and pierced Longbottom all over, but Aaron grew even worse, blood spurting out of his body.

“Heh heh... This is my upgraded version of the Bone Piercing Spell, enjoy!”

Aaron’s face was a mixture of madness and relief as he yelled, “Vinas, I am coming!”

“You lunatic!” Longbottom roared. He pounded on Aaron’s back with his fists, and the great tremors even caused the ground to vibrate.

“Quick! Over there!” Aaron was bleeding from his nose and mouth, he used a sliver of spiritual force to mark out a position.

That was on the flowery pattern on the abdomen area of the spider tattoo on Longbottom’s back. It was now shining with a silver light.

“Kill!”

Baelin’s expression was calm as a great silver aura was released, forming silver white flames.

Large amounts of flame gathered on the Meteor Sword, a terrifying energy wave spreading throughout the entire competition venue, causing the surrounding Magi to involuntarily stop what they were doing.

The huge wings behind Baelin rose, carrying him into the skies, causing him to look like a red meteor streaking through the skies.

“Die!” At this moment, Baelin no longer showed signs of hesitation and unwillingness. The long sword ruthlessly pierced through the defense of the spider image, the blade directly cutting through the marked position.

The illusory spider screeched, and its eight legs started to tremble irregularly. Suddenly, it was sent tumbling down. It then turned into black smog and dispersed.

“Ugh ...glug.....” Longbottom’s expression was very weird; he looked as though he wanted to say something but could not, all that could be heard was a constant gurgling noise made within his throat.

The light in his eyes dimmed until they were a dead black.

Bang! Longbottom’s corpse fell to the ground and sent a huge patch of dust flying.

“We... succeeded!”

Baelin mumbled to himself, feeling as though he lost a part of himself. He felt empty, as though he had lost something very important to him.

“Be careful, the darkness has not ended!” Both of Aaron’s eyes turned white and he fell to the ground, a pool of blood forming beneath his body.

Chapter 381: Coin Of Destiny

“Darkness? What darkness? Hasn’t Longbottom’s scheme been thwarted?” Baelin was doubtful, but he no longer had the time to think. He scooped Aaron up in a hurry, preparing to treat him.

Strands of green rays emerged from Baelin’s fingers, and merged with the horrifying wound on Aaron’s body, helping him stop the bleeding and mending his tissues.

“Aaron, Aaron! Are you alright? Hang in there!” Baelin constantly cried out, large amounts of tears spilling from his eyes.

“Longbottom! Lord Longbottom is dead!” At this time, in the middle of the competition venue, the revolutionary army and dark elves who had just lost their leader all fell into a state of chaos.

Cough Cough! Aaron coughed violently and opened his eyes. “I... I’m still alive?”

“Of course, you’re my prophet. How can you die without my permission?” Baelin covertly brushed away his tears and laughed.

“Oh no!” Aaron suddenly started to struggle.

“What’s happening?” Baelin hurriedly helped him stand up.

“Danger is still near! In fact, it’s in our immediate vicinity!” Aaron’s face showed increasing terror, “He... He is...”

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A person wearing an exquisite black robe emerged amidst sudden applause. Every move of his held an inexplicable aura of authority and grace, and he slowly entered their field of vision.

“As expected of a Magus practicing Sacred Flame. Once you reach rank 2, even I cannot escape your prophecies!”

“Master Leylin! Weren’t you...” Baelin looked at Leylin. At first, he felt joy, but then he noticed the nine statues erected in the center.

“A mere Ice Seal of Eternity, what can it do to me?” Leylin laughed

casually, not revealing that he had known about Longbottom's plan from Ernis. Even if he hadn't known, though, his frightening power and affinity with frost would have let him escape quite easily.

Bang! As though to verify Leylin's words, one of the nine ice sculptures suddenly exploded, revealing the silhouette of a puppet which quickly dissipated.

"What... What's happening? Ah! Haha... Haha... I get it! Master Leylin, this is just a prank, isn't it?" Baelin laughed forcefully, but the unease in his heart had reached its peak.

"Prank? Oh! Yes, I love cracking jokes with you, just not today. I was just excited by your performance and wanted to excuse myself!" Leylin snapped his finger.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Light flashed everywhere, and a large number of Nature's Alliance Magi appeared. Some came out from beneath the stages, some from behind the seats, and some just materialised from the shadows.

These Magi all had their concentration and powers intact, and embarked on a ruthless massacre the moment they entered. The dark elves and Twilight Zone Magi all fell at their hands, and were swept in a matter of seconds.

"Second level seal enhancement begin!" The leader, Iren, immediately tossed out a scroll.

Bzzzt Bzzzt! A frightful wave of energy dispersed, and an even larger fleet of Magi appeared at the center of the competition venue, reinforcing the gigantic spider cocoon.

"Lord Leylin? Why?" Baelin kept retreating, looking as though he was on the verge of breaking down.

"You are one of the higher-ups in Twilight Zone, and also someone I look up to. Why..."

"No particular reason, after directing a play for so long, it's time I came to wrap things up!" The corners of Leylin's mouth turned into a sinister

smirk.

“Play? What kind of play?” Baelin did not dare to think further.

“A comedy about a silly hero, and a group of foolish Magi!” Leylin smiled subtly, and pointed at Baelin’s neck.

Boiling hot! Scalding hot! Baelin felt an unnerving heat exuding from his neck, penetrating through his armor, roasting his skin and muscles.

Boom! A streak of gold light emitted from his neck and returned to Leylin’s palms.

It was a peculiar gold coin, one face of which had a lucky bird and the other a skull. The sides of the coin also had elaborate patterns and prints on them.

“This was the gold coin you gave me, was it all planned from the very beginning?” Baelin laughed pathetically.

“No! I did not have such plans back in Potter Town, but on the way to the Eastern Capital, I found out that you were the Child of Destiny, so I decided to do this!” Leylin looked at the gold coin in his hand, excitement written on his face.

“Hehe..... You are all liars! Liars!” Baelin laughed hysterically. Rays of silver light burst forth from his body, and he charged forth, Meteor Sword in hand.

Pow! A fist of immense strength landed firmly on his cheek, causing the Meteor Sword to be swung out of his grasp even as he was sent flying.

Alas, the Bio Boosting armour on his body failed to hold any longer and disintegrated midair.

“Your destiny was to become the victor of this revolution in your battle with Longbottom! And after Longbottom was taken care of, how do I put it... You are no longer of use to destiny. And without destiny on your side, you are but a dead dog to me...” Leylin ruthlessly attacked Baelin.

It was the truth. Before Baelin completed his mission, were Leylin to have made a move, he had a premonition that something would

inexplicably block his path. But now? There was nothing that could stop him.

This was the very reason why many accomplished heroes never got another chance to take risks and could only choose to live in seclusion among the commoners..

“Coin of Destiny, step one accomplished!” Leylin turned around and looked over at where Aaron was.

Pew! At this moment, a stream of light also emitted from Aaron’s ring, and in front of him appeared the Great Magus Merlin.

“Little Aaron, what did you promise me then?”

“I promised that other than collecting your shards, I’ll have to help you complete another task!” Aaron’s expression was a mix of terror, alarm, and agony.

“Now, I request of you, to return to me the Sacred Flame!” Merlin’s voice was extremely calm, but Aaron couldn’t help but turn pale at his voice. “Grandpa Merlin, I’ve always been respectful to you as though you were my own grandfather...”

“But, the moment you advanced to the second rank, you realised it, no?” Merlin’s illusion transformed continuously before settling on the image of Leylin.

“So all of this; me gaining the inheritance, practicing Sacred Flame, meeting with Vinas; it was all your doing?”

Aaron turned around and looked at Leylin, his pupils pitch black.

“At first it was, but the melodrama at the end was something I couldn’t predict either. It looks like the stability issues with Sacred Flame still have to be solved!” Leylin’s voice was extremely cold, “Now, hand it over!”

“AH!” As soon as Leylin voice sounded, Aaron felt as though his consciousness was split open by someone who wanted to extract something.

The extreme horrifying pain caused him to roll around, and his face

contorted into demon-like expressions.

Shortly after, Aaron felt the spiritual force he had so painstakingly cultivated with the Sacred Flame was drawn out from him entirely.

Strands of silver spiritual force formed a vortex in midair, and Aaron who lost his meditation technique had his powers depleted progressively, from rank 2 to rank 1 before hitting rock bottom—an acolyte.

“The spiritual force of Sacred Flame!” Leylin’s smile broadened. He sang with excitement, “Along with the sacrifice of a Child of Destiny!”

With his deep voice sounding, the surface of the Coin of Destiny shone with a thin layer of light and was lifted into the air.

“With the magnanimous power of destiny, along with the foundation and spiritual force of the Sacred Flame that split apart and then merged together!”

Leylin pulled out a crystal already full of golden liquid, and threw it into the spiritual force vortex.

All of a sudden, a surge of silver white flames emerged from within.

“There are still three broken and unwilling souls!” Leylin’s smile became even wider, and two items flew out from Aaron’s body.

They were a worn-out notebook and a five-colored necklace. At this moment, an illusion flickered on each of the two items.

“Vinas! Vinas!” Aaron struggled as he saw the face of his lover on the five-colored necklace, however, Vinas’ expression was ever-changing, from tenderness, to detachment, to distraught...

“You can join too!” Leylin pointed at Aaron’s forehead and it exploded like a watermelon. The black ring in his hand also flew into the air, joining into a triangular formation with the other two items.

“With great power from the fragmented souls as the main body, the Sacred Flame meditation technique as the core, and finally injecting a large amount of the power of destiny...”

Leylin’s voice grew in fervency.

Following the chanting, the triangular formation and meditative vortex grew closer, giving off small explosions.

“AHHHHHHH.....” Baelin hissed violently and charged forth once again, but before he got close, he was already thrown out by the airwaves.

“Seal!” A complex and awkward-sounding ancient incantation finally fused into two short seals.

Boom Boom! A gigantic vortex formed, compressing the vortex and triangular formation into the Coin of Destiny like a funnel.

When everything ended, flashes of light appeared on the Coin of Destiny, yet it seemed as though nothing had changed.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?”

Leylin let the gold coin float in midair and with a wave of his arm, the Meteor Sword voluntarily flew into his hands.

“You did all this, just for those two items?”

Baelin was beyond miserable, his eyes with a tint alike to flames.

Chapter 382: Epilogue

“It was mainly to attain the power of destiny. The Meteor Sword was just something that came along with it. Besides, it’s not even complete!” Leylin was in a good mood as he explained the details to Baelin.

Soon after, a great number of alchemy ingredients appeared before him. Brilliant rays of light started seeping into the sword and making it shine brighter.

“The truth is, the Meteor Sword was designed by and customised for me, and it is missing the most important step!” Leylin drew the sword and held it up, his eyes glistening with excitement.

“Toxic Bile!”

The terrifying image of a devil king started to manifest behind him. But this time round, the Toxic Bile was concentrated on the Meteor Sword instead of a large-scale attack.

Menacing, deathly strands of black crawled onto the sword and the once-bright silver glow started to dim before turning a glistening coal-black.

This was the original intention of Leylin to forge the weapon.

The scope of the attack by the Toxic Bile was too large. Leylin thus confined its poison within the sword, preventing it from diffusing freely.

Henceforth, anyone who was injured by the sword would immediately be poisoned. In addition, Leylin could use his own innate spells to supplement its already-great power.

Leylin looked at the dark sword shining in his hands, unable to mask his happiness. From here on, the power of Toxic Bile would not be used recklessly. Rather, it would be his common means of attack, greatly increasing his strength and power.

“There is one last procedure!” Leylin glanced over at Baelin, with a sharp look in his eyes.

Baelin had understood how this was going to turn out. He looked at Leylin and told him fearlessly, “I believe in the fairness and righteousness of Twilight Zone. You’ll be punished for everything you’ve done!”

“Haha... Fairness and righteousness ?”

Leylin shook his head and laughed, “The glory of my achievements will be recorded and sung by the people. As for the unglamorous stories behind the glory, who would pay any attention to them?”

A ray of black swooshed across. Baelin’s head was decapitated, and before it could land on the ground, both his head and body had started to decompose.

Blood splashed on the surface of the gold coin and the once brilliant shiny surface became dull. It seemed to faintly be emitting a hint of history.

“Lastly, with the sacrifice of the child of destiny! Unique magic item—Coin of Destiny, complete!” Leylin finished his last incantation.

The gloomy yet glowing item lay ominously in his hand.

“Unique magic item—Coin of Destiny! With the Sacred Flame at its core, and the blood sacrifice of the child of destiny, will bring forth a magic item that has an astonishing amount of power. The coin can guide us through the path of the future to a certain extent, and may produce uncertain results!”

The A.I. Chip tried to generate a description for the coin. However, it was very clear that even the A.I. Chip could not make an accurate judgement of its powers; after all, things such as fate and the power of destiny could not be assessed by the current A.I. Chip or expressed by data.

The supposed unique magic item was hard to be categorised.

In the Magus world, there were always magical items that possessed a power which surpassed magic equipment. However, the physical quality itself might be weak, while some others contain bizarre capabilities. Hence, they were not categorised the same as magic artifacts and magic

equipment but had a classification of their own.

Amongst the unique magic items, some possessed limited capabilities, while there were others that display a horrifying amount of power!

A ray of silver lit up and, in a flash, Coin of Destiny had vanished into the bag Leylin was carrying.

“Kill the dark elves and the revolutionary army! As for the Magi of Twilight Zone, kill them too if they don’t pledge allegiance to me!”

Leylin looked around and inspected his surroundings.

The Magi of Twilight Zone may have had an advantage in numbers, but the lengthy battle had exhausted them of their stamina and magic power. They were no match for the fresh Magi of Nature’s Alliance.

Furthermore, the Alliance had the support of Leylin, a rank 2 Magus.

As time passed, the field got progressively quieter before settling for silence.

“Sire! What do I do with these captives?” Iren asked with a bow.

There were weak and dispirited Magi all around, many of them covered with wounds and blood from multiple injuries.

“They are to hand over their spirit sources to me, kill them if they refuse!” Leylin gave the order indifferently.

Soon after, Leylin moved towards the remaining eight Magi encased in the ice sculptures and pointed at them.

“I shall add another layer of seals on these eight Magi. They will be transported back to headquarters to be interrogated by me!”

The Magi from Nature’s Alliance were lying in ambush and the plan was carried out according to what he had planned. And sure enough, the results at the end were very favourable. The exhausted and injured Magi from both sides were eliminated at one stroke.

In fact, Leylin was the one who notified the Guardian on the outside and asked for his assistance.

“The war outside should be ending about now?” Leylin smiled. He held up a special artifact and sent a communication signal through it.

“My Lord! Reporting on our status. The Magi on our side as well as the dark elves are severely injured. The dark elves have withdrawn their troops, but we cannot pursue due to similar losses on our end!” one of the Magi on the battlefield reported.

Any attempts at communication had been blocked long ago by Longbottom. With Leylin’s enhancement to the cocoon, only his own artifact could communicate with the outside.

“Very good! The current situation is the best of the three scenarios that I had anticipated!”

Leylin swept his eyes over the Magi from Nature’s Alliance and smiled, “As long as we follow and advance according to the plan, soon the entirety of Twilight Zone will be ours!”

Leylin had never led before, but he had experienced much in the Magus world. With his ability to influence their minds, Leylin’s words were bewitching and convincing.

Although there were some Magi among the crowd below that seemed to be somewhat hesitant, Leylin was pleased to see the obvious fiery ambition sparkling in their eyes, dispersing any sign of restlessness and confusion.

“As long as you are a living being with wisdom, it is difficult to remain unwavering in the face of temptation!” Leylin rejoiced covertly in his heart but also let out a sigh...

The news about the incident at the young genius competition spread like wildfire through the Twilight Zone.

The leader of the revolutionary army, Longbottom, had disguised himself and snuck into the competition as a contestant. Once he was crowned champion, he plotted against the judges.

Thereafter, the dark elven forces, under the conceal of their crown, joined to complete the ambush.

Even though their troops retreated in the end, a huge amount of damage was inflicted on the central region, causing numerous casualties.

The situation of the arena was worse. The losses there were tremendous, and only a few Magi had survived.

Leylin, most powerful of the survivors as a rank 2, issued complaints about the dark elves' conduct, calling for action from the central region.

After his return to the base, Leylin immediately gathered all of his Magi. Seeking the assistance of the other Magi who favoured his cause and started organising an army.

The central region was currently in a state of tremendous chaos. A large number of high-level Magi had perished. The Guardian of the Realm, as well as the other Protectors, had all vanished without a trace as well. In the name of righteousness and for other reasons, the remaining Magi all united under Leylin's banner.

Leylin, who was at the centre of attention, headed towards a different place on his own.

This single empty space seemed to have emerged from the Earth's crust, it was narrow and cramped, the continuously faint but hurried breathing could still be heard.

Bang! A massive explosion sounded and crushed rocks flew everywhere.

In the midst of the mayhem, Leylin smiled as he walked forward with the Coin of Destiny in his hand, "Lord Guardian of the Realm, and Protector Logan, you both are truly very good at hiding. It took me awhile to find this place!"

Leylin took a quick glance around and realised that there were 2 dead bodies lying in this cave and on their corpses, some rank 2 energy was still present.

A half-naked old man, whose body was covered with incantations and coloured spots, leant against a rock trying to catch a breath. On the other side was a familiar face, Logan from the east. When he saw Leylin, he couldn't believe his eyes.

It seemed as if after the battle with the dark elves and Anya, two of the Protectors had died. Logan and the Guardian of the Realm were still struggling with their breaths.

“Why.... Why is it you?” Logan asked with a pale face.

“Oh?” Leylin raised his eyebrow, “Looks like there are many Magi out there who miss you! So much so that you do not even dare to go back to your old nest, preferring to hide outside...”

But he didn’t mind because, in the face of true power and capability, any crafty conspiracy would seem like a joke.

“How did you find us? Forget it, that is not important right now. I just want to know, young Magus, do you belong to us or the dark elves?” the Guardian by the wall struggled to ask.

“There’s no need to worry. The dark elves are not rich enough to bribe me! As for Twilight Zone’s Magi, they shall step on the path to glory under my leadership!”

“Well then! Go ahead!” the Guardian smiled, his eyes gleaming with wisdom.

“....” Leylin bowed slightly in respect to the Guardian who dedicated his whole life to serve the Twilight Zone. Soon after, a thick black darkness shrouded the entire area.

The border between the northern and central region of the Twilight Zone.

At this moment, in an open plain, two enormous armies were about to confront each other.

On the north was the dark elven army, their skilled knights riding Underground Winter Spiders and emitting continuous energy waves from their bodies.

Chapter 383: A Fallen Empress

The human camp was more complicated.

Many Magi, acolytes and even common soldiers had been gathered together like a mixed flock of birds.

It had turned out this way due to the lack of core leadership. The deaths of the Guardian of the Realm and the Protectors had left them without a stable chain of command. Hence, many problems arose, not the least of which was disputes in command. Many ambitious parties were working from the shadows, plotting their own schemes.

“Oh? People are gossiping about me?” Back at his own camp, Leylin was updated with the latest report, and his face revealed a mysterious sinister smile.

“Don’t bother with them. These rumours will be deemed baseless soon enough!” Leylin waved his hand and flashed a faint smile.

Suddenly his face changed as he looked towards the northern skies, “She’s here!”

A tiny black speck suddenly rose from the northern skies, bringing a huge and irresistible power to bear upon the two armies.

“Your Majesty.” Numerous elite Underground Winter Spider knights knelt down to salute with zeal in their eyes.

Anya looked up to face the human army, her beautiful face and body exuding a mysterious charm.

“Where is your commander? I want to see him!” she spoke with a sweet yet icy tone to her voice, as alluring as a rose in a bloody scene. It was tender and beautiful, yet dangerous and deadly.

And so that voice with the strength of a Magus was heard even on the side of the humans.

Numerous ordinary troops started fainting and dying, many of them shedding patches of hair and bleeding furiously.

This was the result of radiations emitted recklessly from a high ranking Magus's spell, causing the destruction of the normal human's body.

The acolytes too started to faint one after the other, until only official Magi could remain clear-headed, although even their fighting strength was heavily reduced.

Streams of green air could be seen, being drawn out from the human camp and transferred to Anya who was hovering in mid-air.

"A false domain! There were rumours that the dark elven empress had attained such a high level— the ability to suck life and power out of them is a formidable gift!"

Leylin's expression showed signs of interest and he turned to look at the other high ranking Magi.

In the human camp, the rest of the high-ranking Magi were waiting in their tents in silence. Waves of spatial magic power permeated the air.

"The battle has yet to begun, and you're already about to run away?" Leylin laughed uncontrollably, but then felt that it was only right. After all, these Magi had thought that the empress of the dark elves had been severely injured. If not, the Guardian of the Realm would have survived as well.

What now?

"At this moment, the Magi outside would mostly likely be vehemently cursing me, huh?" Leylin shook his head, as his body floated to mid-air.

Roar! A massive, ferocious aura that seemed to emanate from a predator of ancient times burst forth.

A wave of violent air rolled and surged through, causing huge chaos to the opposite camp. The other Magi noticed that this wave of energy was not inferior to that of the dark elven empress!

"Bloodline Skill—Intimidating Gaze!"

Snap! Leylin's life force rose ferociously, as if a chain or seal had been broken, and at that moment, he had crossed the category of a rank 2

Magus and entered a deep and unmeasurable realm.

This kind of change upset Anya, “Rank 3! You have already advanced to rank 3! “

Yes! Before the murder of the Guardian of the Realm, Leylin had secretly arranged for his advancement to a rank 3 Magus.

With the Giant Serpent’s Breath potion and the usage of a large amount of top-notch resources, Leylin’s spiritual force had turned bright silver long ago, and his power had been enhanced greatly.

As for the next level in Kemoyin’s Pupil, Leylin already had it! In fact, with the A.I. chip’s enhancement, it had become even more all-encompassing.

That in addition to the enlightenment from the Tree of Wisdom formed the perfect conditions to ensure success.

Leylin’s intention was to elevate his power to be on the same level as the best of Twilight Zone, so that he would have the confidence to carry out his plans.

The breakthrough had surprised Leylin. His materialised spiritual force had been refined continuously and, at the same time, the foundations of the spiritual force crystal had been constructed. The swiftness and ease of it had left Leylin with an unfathomable feeling.

It could be the result from the use of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent’s blood or from the accumulated knowledge from the A.I. Chip. It might be the great essence of wisdom found in the ancient tree that no one knew about. Or it could be the different factors all coming together that assisted Leylin in acquiring his current position. It had surely surpassed his own expectations.

The enhanced A.I.Chip thus refreshed Leylin’s status.

[Leylin Farlier, Rank 3 Warlock. Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent, Power: 23.6, Agility: 20.1, Physique: 35.7, Vitality: 203.4, Magic Power: 203(Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force)] [Host has obtained an innate spell upon advancement– Intimidating Gaze!]

[Intimidating Gaze: After numerous blood purification, the Giant Kemoyin Serpent, as an elite ancient predator, has its might absorbed and assimilated into the bloodline Warlock. They who held the dignity of creatures from ancient times has a force field with an intimidating effect! Effect: any living being that is within the perimeter will have their powers suppressed. Those with weak willpower will enter a state of confusion. Rank 1 Magus will have their abilities weakened by 50%, rank 2 Magus weakened by 30% and Magi of the same rank will have their stats reduced by 10%!]

With such an ability to suppress the power of his enemies, Leylin seemed genuinely ready to dominate the field. In fact, he could be considered an ideal Magus to dominate everything!

Unlike the domain of a Morning Star Magus, which gave them complete control, Intimidating Gaze only applied certain effects to those caught within its area of effect.

With Leylin now using Intimidating Gaze, the Underground Winter Spider knights felt as if an eye from the depths of hell was gazing upon them, which caused them to collapse to the ground. As for the matriarchs, their faces turned ashen, warping with terror.

Leylin took a calculative look at the empress in front of him. Strictly speaking, this could be considered their first meeting.

His relentless gaze transcended the opposing party's demonic charm, instead, he paid more attention to the decorative design on her body.

A moment late, Leylin sighed and responded faintly: "So... You were already seriously injured!"

The suppression of injuries by the branding of runes on the body, as well as the familiar scent, reminded Leylin of the Guardian of the Realm who had perished. The vicious fight with him and the Protectors had obviously caused Anya to suffer serious injuries, leaving her with no choice but to retreat.

Anya looked at the youthful Leylin, showing a bitter smile.

“Do you know? Dark elves’ lives are filled with hardships. When I was young, every winter I would witness many dark elves firmly geared up with weaponry. My mother told me they were gearing up for war, and after the war, we would have enough food and provisions to survive...” Anya’s face was filled with loss, her voice angelic. The corners of her eyes sparkled.

“My mother told me that, far away on the southern side, there was a huge empire of the human race. It was continuously fighting with us for survival. Hence, every year we suffer huge losses and death. I’d decided then that I would lead an army of dark elves and break this cruel cycle...

“But now, unfortunately, I am unable to do so...”

Anya turned to look at the dark elven camp one more time, and at this moment, an enormous uproar occurred. Several rank 2 matriarchs disregarded the frightening energy wave and stormed straight forward.

“Can you promise me, that you will preserve the dark elven race?” Anya lowered her once arrogant head, pleading.

Looking at the intelligent and well-respected empress of the dark elves in front of him, Leylin nodded his head lightly, “I promise you that I will preserve the dark elves and see that they remain in Twilight Zone....”

“However, what the other Magi do afterwards will be out of my hands. Moreover, whether the dark elves are able to survive within the ecology laboratory is also another unpredictable matter...” These words were left unsaid.

“Thank you so much!” Anya smiled, the crown on her head giving off a glaring ray of light.

The moment Leylin swung his hand, a huge golden Spider appeared and landed in the center of the field. It sat facing the Underground Winter Spiders across it and started hissing loudly.

The Underground Winter Spiders then became increasingly restless, and many of them started to show signs of instability. Some even turned against the dark elven knights riding them and started biting at them.

Aru, the Underground Winter Spider Emperor, had originally been

sealed by Longbottom. Leylin had unsealed it after the events at the arena and subdued it for his own use.

To a certain extent, Aru might be the common ancestor of all Underground Winter Spiders, hence to have such unbelievable power for use by him, he was thrilled to possess this killer weapon.

“Here we go!”

Leylin exclaimed lightly, fine black scales appearing on his body and striking Anya’s at the same time...

Along with the loud hissing of both opposing spiders and the clash of the two Magi, the two opposing troops on the ground also started to assemble and started the attack in full force, the roar of their voices shaking the earth....

Twilight Zone, year 5782. Magus Leylin Farlier led the human army to crush the army of the dark elves along with their empress. Magus Anya, along with rank 1 and rank 2 matriarchs, were not spared. Together with the rest of the army, they collapsed at the scene and countless lives were lost.

Chapter 384: Guardian of the Realm

After Leylin's progression to rank 3 and the defeat of the dark elves, all the dissent and secret plots in the central region quieted down as if they had never existed.

As a newly promoted rank 3 Magus full of vitality, one who wasn't struggling to even protect the realm, Leylin could easily find the time to destroy those guilds that did not subject themselves to his rule. He was poised to control Twilight Zone for centuries to come.

Faced with the pressure from such great power, no matter how unwilling the Magi in the central region were, they dared not offend him.

At this moment, the few survivors from other guilds appeared, diminishing all talk against Leylin.

They were all elite Magi from different guilds, and a few rank 2 judges were also among them. They joined together to testify that what Leylin had said before was the truth, which waived all doubts immediately.

They were all Leylin's captives at that time. Those rank 2 Magi had long since submitted to Leylin. They were not fools. Knowing Leylin's power and their own waning influence, most of them recognised the truth.

Of course, there were some stubborn ones that all perished gloriously in the "war."

Twilight Zone year 5783. Aided by his rank 3 power and the glory of defeating the dark elves, Leylin was pronounced the Guardian of the Realm under the witness of many Magi in the central region.

From then, Leylin became the sole power controlling Twilight Zone's Magi, and the sacrifices and darkness behind his radiant glory were often ignored by the masses.

People would only end up remembering Leylin's glorious achievement of defeating the dark elves. They composed folk songs and legends in his praise, leaving out the hard work of Baelin, Aaron, Vinas, and even the previous Guardian. Those names were buried beneath the documents and

historical records concerning Leylin's eternal brilliance, and his legend continued.

After succeeding the title of the Guardian of the Realm, the first order Leylin passed was aimed at making Nature's Alliance the core strength of Twilight Zone. He gathered large masses of Magi to construct the Nature's Alliance Academy at the heart of the central region.

Although Leylin had not planned to do so originally, the present him did have the strength to implement the academy system, reaping great rewards in the process.

After establishing the Nature's Alliance Academy, a few large-scale guilds who had good relationships with the Alliance made a high-profile announcement. They would merge with Nature's Alliance Academy to form a formidable guild. Of course, this was all due to Leylin's control in the background.

Following that, Leylin no longer had to worry. The rapidly rising academy naturally edged out other nearby guilds, continually expanding its capability and area of influence.

It was clear to Leylin that the south coast's model was more just and fair than the guild system followed by Twilight Zone. They had also relinquished the tradition of inheritance from master to disciple. Although there were still many mentors, very few of them continued treating their acolytes like slaves.

Furthermore, how many acolytes could a mentor take on? How could they compare to the large-scale classrooms of an academy?

Many large guilds started to relinquish their narrow-minded restriction of meditation techniques to combine forces, as it would definitely be much stronger than the strength of individual guilds.

This was the success of the system! It was also the improvement of an era, once it became a trend, it could not be stopped!

The guilds that were left behind, in order to not be overshadowed by the academies, also had to establish institutes and enroll many acolytes to

survive.

This allowed talented commoners to have a very good chance.

Academies that were more free and open could also accept roaming Magi. Without the meditation technique restriction, it became much simpler for roaming Magi who wanted to join academies.

Leylin had noticed this long ago. Although guilds that practised the same kind of meditation technique were very united, they also became highly xenophobic. After joining a guild, if a Magi did not practice that guild's meditation technique, they became targets for ostracization.

But academies did not face this problem. The flames of the revolution started by Longbottom were also snuffed out gradually by the institution of academies.

Leylin did not actually mind this. What he prioritised was still the meditation techniques of the guilds and their valued research.

Indeed! Under the advocacy of fair, just, transparent and free communication by the academy's rules, guilds that joined the academy had to contribute their unique meditation techniques and some precious research.

Under Leylin's leadership, this large amount of precious information was stored in the academy's library for all Magi to peruse, and this trend developed ardently.

It must be said that after relinquishing the narrow-minded notion of a guild, such open communication and probing indeed benefitted the Magi a lot, causing the Magi of Twilight Zone to improve their abilities.

As for these meditation techniques and research, all of it was naturally kindly accepted by Leylin, greatly increasing the A.I chip's database.

It can be said that at this point in time, a large portion of Twilight Zone's meditation techniques and high-level research was pocketed by Leylin, including all precious resources.

Nature's Alliance was now the most influential in the central region. No

matter what Leylin desired, as long as it was within Twilight Zone, he needed but to ask. A large number of commoners, acolytes, rank 1 and even rank 2 Magi would unhesitatingly go get it for him no matter the cost.

This was the benefit of authority.

Time passed.

Twilight Zone, year 5785.

Sensing that every party had completed their preparations, Leylin, with his title of Guardian of the Realm, sent out an appeal ordering alliance forces from all regions to recapture the north!

Indeed! After murdering Anya, Leylin chose to retreat and did not directly attack the North region, but that place was now easily obtainable.

It was very clear to him that though he had exceptional abilities, he first had to sort out his own skills. Although impulsively sending troops to defeat the dark elves, recover their lost lands and gain reputation could work out, the real gains would definitely be reaped by others harbouring ambitious schemes.

In addition, at that point in time, he did not have the title of Guardian of the Realm! Leylin was not foolish enough to fight on the front lines and let the Magi at the back reap the fruit of his efforts.

Hence, he would rather watch on as the north's remaining dark elves waged war against the dwarves, gnomes, and even themselves, letting them wear themselves out before he would act.

But now, the time was ripe.

Compared to the previous appeal, Leylin was now the Guardian of the Realm, the ruler of Twilight Zone. The orders of the greatest leader of the Magus world naturally carried more weight.

Once the order was passed down, not only did all the guilds in the central region send out Magi and soldiers to form an alliance, even the east, south and west regions sent out large masses to help.

Something worth mentioning was that Leylin only had true control over two regions— the center and the east.

As for the west and south, their attitudes toward Leylin as the Guardian of the Realm were rather ambiguous.

But Leylin did not care, after organising the center and east, relying on the strength of the academies in these two regions was enough to crush the other party.

He had abstained from doing so earlier because his time was occupied by internal restructuring.

But now? The other regions had also sensed that conditions were not favourable for them, and they started to yield.

After all, sending out armies in accordance to the appeal was an act of allegiance.

Leylin stroked his chin, the corners of his mouth curled up in amusement.

North Twilight Zone.

Throngs of troops lined up neatly and advanced forward constantly.

Meanwhile at the back were large numbers of Magi riding peculiar transports.

The troops were neat and orderly, and unified by the same order, compared to the previous army organised by Leylin, this one seemed much more powerful.

Due to the passing of the dark elven empress three years ago, most of the dark elves had already withdrawn from north Twilight Zone. Only some of the more stubborn members of their race were left struggling along with the dwarves and gnomes.

And such strength, to a congregation of many Magi, especially the human troops led by Leylin, was as insignificant as dust.

The troops had an irresistible force. They conquered expansive plots of land by barely expending any energy and even pushed through to Potti

city.

At the entrance of the city, the flag of the dark elves could be seen flying high, amidst thick smog, giving off an ominous feel.

“Potti City! The original line of defence of the north, and also the place where Protector Yade died!” Leylin looked at the few dark elves and sneered, “This is a strategic border town, could it be the dark elves are still dreaming of dividing the land with us?”

“Pass down the order, all troops are to pitch camp here, we will attack tomorrow!”

Leylin casually passed the order to his left and right-hand men, and they passed down the message layer by layer. The entire troop stopped and found themselves suitable spaces to pitch camps. At the moment, the Magi and normal soldiers were busy, but they were not in disorder, displaying the good control Leylin had over his army.

In the center of the closely packed camps was a big gold tent, decorated with exquisite gemstones and incense. There were even teams of Magi patrolling outside of it.

Although the Guardian of the Realm did not fancy all this, it was necessary etiquette.

“Hm?” Leylin who was meditating in the middle of the gold tent suddenly opened his eyes and his mouth turned into a smile.

After a few minutes, a congratulatory voice could be heard “Master!”

“Enter!”

The front curtain was unveiled and a middle-aged man with white hair entered, his being radiated with the scary energy of a rank 2 Magi, but at this moment, he kneeled down on one knee as a form of respect to Leylin.

“Reporting to master! There is a rank 2 matriarch of the dark elves who claims to be an old friend and wants to see you!”

“An old friend?” Leylin smiled, “Let her in.”

Chapter 385: Allegiance

The rank 2 Magus deferentially accepted the order and left, and minutes later, a rank 2 dark elven matriarch in skintight clothing walked in.

Her face was extremely delicate, her skin pale and exquisite. She was evidently a beauty that was hard to come by, though her expression now held apprehension.

“Alicia! As expected, it’s you!” Leylin laughed.

Out of all the dark elves, it was just this one matriarch that he had been standing against for ten or so years in Dolon City, and they could somewhat be considered acquaintances.

“Alicia greets the lord Guardian of the Realm!” The dark elven matriarch Alicia bit her lips, and then knelt and leaned down, respectfully touching her head to the cold ground.

She was still slightly dazed. This young Magus that had contested with her for over ten years had long since reached the apex of the Magus World and had left her far behind. When she saw him, she even needed to kneel. She did not want to do this, yet could not express it on the outside.

From Leylin’s point of view, he took in everything, from the pretty and flirtatious matriarch’s exquisite jade-like back, rounded taut buttocks, to her slender, firm thighs.

As if noticing Leylin’s gaze, a look of bashfulness appeared on Alicia’s face, but she secretly wriggled her body, revealing a silent charm.

In her heart, however, she felt an intense feeling of humiliation.

Though dark elves were very open when it came to promiscuity to the point they could have boy toys of different races as well, it was always the dark elves dominating in the psychological aspect, with their mental belief in their stance as masters and owners who were untouchable.

But now? This experience of offering herself up as a gift and fearing the other party not accepting was difficult for Alicia, a matriarch of fewer than 200 years and a very mentally sensitive dark elf.

“So what is your intention in coming here?” Leylin withdrew his gaze. He had always been able to control himself when it mattered.

In addition, after advancing to be a rank 3 Warlock and taking over as the Guardian of the Realm, there were more than enough women wanting to climb into his bed. There had even been dark elves who had attempted this— after the great defeat of the dark elves, there was a large dive in the prices of dark elven slaves in the slave market, and there were many dark elven nobles on sale! It had to be said that because of their great outer appearance and innate skill at magic, dark elves were truly the most suitable choice to be Magus slaves.

Even if Leylin did not express anything, there would be Magi racking their brains on how to please him and sending him captive dark elves for him to enjoy.

“I represent the dark elven race and am here to offer my allegiance to my lord! Please let my race go!” Alicia’s voice brought with it sorrow as she continued kneeling, passing over a fine crown and a black crystal.

“This is the symbol of our power—the dark elven crown, as well as the complete volume of the high-grade meditation technique, ‘Life Absorption.’ We dark elves are willing to completely withdraw from north Twilight Zone, even pulling back till the north of the river. We will also supply top-grade exclusive slaves and many precious resources. Please let us off!” Alicia continued to beg while kowtowing.

“This...” Leylin pondered, fingers circling and rapping to create a regular rhythm.

Alicia’s breath almost stopped, awaiting the judgment of destiny in terror and anticipation.

“Fine.” Leylin nodded in agreement.

After the human race’s allied force recovered the northern region, it lacked the ability to advance and gain more.

In addition, Leylin still had other ideas.

An absolute power meant that once the human race completely

extinguished the dark elves, gnomes, and dwarves with his help, they could very well decline quickly due to internal strife. This was not what Leylin wanted to see.

A constant, unyielding external pressure would evidently be able to serve the function of spurring on the humans.

“Many thanks, my lord!” Alicia was so elated she was on the verge of tears.

Though Leylin could immediately enjoy the enthusiastic desire of this matriarch to serve him, he still chased her out.

It was obvious that Alicia’s value could not compare to the dark elven crown and high-grade meditation technique.

“Magic equipment– Dark Elven Crown!”

Leylin caressed the surface of this magic equipment. As it had been used recently in the war, the crown’s surface was dim, and it seemed unremarkable.

If not for knowing about it beforehand, Leylin might have been tricked by its outer appearance and missed this magic equipment.

In the world of the Magi, magic equipment ranked far above magic artifacts. They held a mysterious power within, and usually, only Magi at rank 3 and higher would have the opportunity to come into contact with one.

[Discovered magic equipment, beginning scan!] [Beep! Scanning complete. 45.9% could not be analysed. Obtained high-grade concealing and icy runes, as well as traces of incomplete high-grade illusory spell formation runes...]

Many prompts from the A.I. Chip appeared.

“This is just the start. If I can completely analyse the inner workings of this magical device, I might even be able to forge my own...”

Leylin could tell that this was a great opportunity for him. He had been unable to improve his alchemy and high-grade enchantment skills in

recent times.

“And this!” Leylin picked up that black crystal.

Large amounts of information streamed in front of Leylin’s eyes. They were written in the dark elven language, but this was nothing important. Earlier in the eastern region, Leylin had obtained much fundamental academic content through the library in Nature’s Alliance. Things like the dark elven language were nothing much.

“Life Absorption!” This was a high-grade meditation technique passed down by the dark elves. Only dark elves who were as powerful as matriarchs were qualified to train in it.

From this, it could be seen that Longbottom had really been doing well with the dark elves, and had gained their trust.

“This meditation technique...” Leylin touched his chin, recalling the information the A.I. Chip had just recorded.

Even though this bit of time was not enough for him to completely analyse the meditation technique, he largely knew its characteristics and uses.

Life Absorption was obviously rated as high-grade and was in the top class even in Twilight Zone. If not, dark elves themselves had many high-grade meditation techniques. Why would they make it a rule that it was a meditation technique to be passed down?

The characteristic of Life Absorption was that it could increase the spiritual force by robbing life force from other creatures, thus helping with breakthroughs.

The higher the level, the easier it was to gain the life force of various creatures. At the end, it could even cause a deathly vortex that was similar to a calamity, and all creatures in range would be attacked regardless of what they were.

However, this meditation technique did have its disadvantages.

As it relied on robbing life force to improve, its foundations were not

stable. There had not even been a single matriarch who could break through from the rank 3 level into the Morning Star realm.

Besides, when one reached the more profound parts of the meditation technique, the Magus himself or herself would find their life force disappearing. This could not be compensated with any method other than the life force of other creatures.

The moment the life energy gained was too immense, or if the Magus' rank was too high, the Magi who trained in Life Absorption would lose their life force at a faster rate.

This meant that every time Magi who trained in Life Absorption used it, it meant they were one step closer to the abyss of death. However, with the growth of strength and the later loss of life force, it was like a drug that influenced many Magi to use it and eventually destroy themselves.

“To cultivate in this sort of meditation technique, it's best to find an ancient creature with enough life force and drain all its life force, succeeding in training in this meditation technique all at one go.”

Leylin's plentiful experience allowed him to think of a few methods to solve this issue, but he then shook his head.

“It's not just the difficulty in advancing in meditation techniques. Ancient creatures that have great life force cannot be underestimated by even rank 3 Magi... Unless it was their remains...”

At this thought, Leylin naturally thought about the Icy Cave.

If nothing unexpected happened, in the deeper parts of the Icy Cave, the Icy World held within the body of a creature with the strength of at least Morning Star strength, as well as the blood of an even more frightening existence.

“With my current strength, what will it be like if I go to the Icy World?”

Leylin was silent for a while, and a gold light suddenly flashed in his hands, a simple gold coin appeared in his palm.

Bling! Leylin flung the coin, and there was a sole golden arc in the air

that then landed on the back of his hand.

Leylin lifted his palm and he saw the side with a skull engraved on it pointing up. Its eyes seemed to be ridiculing him with its smirk.

“It won’t end up well?” Leylin murmured, and gave up all thoughts of proceeding forth.

Ka-cha! Immediately after, a slight crack appeared on the surface of Coin of Destiny.

As the unique magic item, Leylin had created by exhausting his thoughts, Coin of Destiny had the terrifying ability to predict the future!

However, there was also a limit. Though Leylin had given it a sacrifice using the child of destiny, as well as added much spiritual force from Sacred Flame, he did not train in this meditation technique and thus, could not obtain images and specific information. He could only approximate the judgment through positive and negative predictions.

Besides, due to the constraints from Sacred Flame’s level and the ranking of the sacrifice, there was a limit to how many times Coin of Destiny could be used.

If he wanted predictions on rank 3 Magi and below, it could be used for a long time, but once it got up to the Morning Star realm, each usage would result in great damage to Coin of Destiny itself and then cause it to fall apart.

Leylin had asked for predictions on the situation if he headed to the icy caves. The skull head was up, implying that if Leylin really did that, it would not end up well for him.

Chapter 386: Radiant Guardian

“It’s still a no.” Leylin kept the Coin of Destiny, feeling slightly crestfallen.

The Coin of Destiny had been cast rather crudely. Due to the involvement of Morning Star Magi, it was already damaged, and if it got worse, Leylin truly had no idea where else he would find a child of destiny to offer as a sacrifice.

Though he could make prophecies the way he had used Aaron, they had no way to make predictions regarding higher-ranked existences, and the risks in that were too huge.

Humans were creatures full of possibilities. If the Magi that Leylin had chosen managed to advance till they were on the same level as Leylin and managed to prophesize his actions, there would be no way Leylin could benefit from it. Leylin would rather use these dead creatures. Though they were troublesome, they were convenient and very safe! That was what he prioritised.

“Even I with my rank 3 strength will meet with dangers that cannot be measured in the Icy World. Looks like that’s still a place that I can’t peek into.” Leylin was clear on his situation. He now held most of Twilight Zone in the palm of his hand and had nothing to be anxious over.

The Icy Cave would always be present, so the things inside would be his sooner or later!

After the entire dark elven race surrendered, all that was left to take care of in the northern region were the gnomes, dwarves and few remaining guilds there.

Leylin could not be bothered with this and used his overbearing power to take care of it.

A few days later, a shocking rumour spread.

Lord Leylin, Guardian of the Realm in Twilight Zone, charged into the dwarves’ stronghold, the Taline Caves, alone.

They said that the lord relied on his own power and barged in head on, and went all the way into the dwarves' royal court.

Berserk lightning and the terrifying aura of death constantly shrouded the area. The battle continued for numerous days before it stopped.

From then on, however, the royal dwarven court sent out an announcement, saying that their respected ruler, King Greybeard, and various other important ministers had died from illness. The young dwarven prince inherited the throne and immediately withdrew his troops...

The same thing happened in the gnome kingdom.

This time, the explosions could be seen with the naked eye. Their machinery was ruined, and the three godly weapons which represented the peak of their alchemic skills were turned into trash. Many of their outstanding artisans were also kidnapped, and thus they lost many essential resources and research material about advanced alchemy.

From then on, Leylin's fame spread throughout Twilight Zone. Besides humans, even when dark elves and gnomes mentioned him, they did not dare call him by his name. He had been titled the Radiant Guardian.

His image had been recorded as a legend by other races, and news of his being an exceptionally terrifying existence was passed down.

Of course, Leylin had not considered all these. He was now sitting on the most respected gold throne in Potti City and instructing Iren.

"Divide the resources in the newly-recovered northern region, and prioritise the guilds who've sided or displayed their goodwill towards us. As for the rest of the harvest, confiscate it all."

Leylin's intentions in attacking north Twilight Zone was not to be a good samaritan, but to get rich.

Through many years of development, there were various abundant resources in the northern region. Most guilds had died out during the chaotic war, which gave him another excuse to take them over.

As for those lucky enough to survive? Besides those who sided with

Leylin's side, whom he gave special treatment to, he was not planning to bother with the rest.

"Then... How about the Magi who've set up organisations there?" Iren was slightly hesitant.

Due to the chaos, not just other races but also other guilds from Twilight Zone had dispatched people to the former north Twilight Zone. They attempted to seize some things and even occupied a small territory, having a long-term confrontation with dark elves and managed to survive with their tenacity.

This was a result of Leylin killing the opposite party's great matriarch in one blow. If not, no matter how gutsy they were, they would not dare even consider this area.

"Handle this in the same way. Also, for those stubborn guilds unwilling to submit to me, arrest them on the grounds of treason and colluding with the enemy. As for the evidence? Just look for Alicia. I'm sure she'll be willing to supply it." Leylin smirked.

This was basically an act to eliminate all outsiders, but Leylin's crushing strength and his advantage of acting on an absolute righteous cause allowed everything to seem calm and organised.

In reality, Leylin was building north Twilight Zone up as the headquarters of Nature's Alliance.

In the other regions, the strength of the Magi made everything tricky, and it was difficult to just insert an exceptionally large-scale guild within.

Nature's Alliance Academy in the central and eastern region had expanded to its peak already.

If this was in the past, Leylin could simply continue expanding outwards, but the situation was now different. Due to the war, the northern region was destroyed by the chaos and many guilds had died out. The nobility and other chains of command had almost completely been wiped out as well.

Though this partly had to do with the cruelty of dark elves, most of it had to do with various organisations who were hidden deep within. Leylin

had also played an important role there.

After most of the original organisations in the northern region were purged, it was time for the strong to divide up the feast.

Leylin, who held an absolute advantage and Nature's Alliance Academy, gained the largest part of the benefits!

A few months later, a large branch academy of Nature's Alliance was established there. Besides being a branch in name, the facilities and allocation of staff were based on the highest standards and even bested the headquarters in the central region.

With the completion of the branch academy, Leylin gained complete control of north Twilight Zone. For the two areas which were still hesitating, this was a huge shock.

In the year 5786 of Twilight Zone, the western and southern regions that had only been pledging their allegiance on the surface could no longer hold on and announced their agreement to support Nature's Alliance academy in the central region. They received guidance from the great Guardian of the Realm and built a joint academy.

Twilight Zone was unified, and the prestige of the Guardian of the Realm, Leylin, was deep in the hearts of the masses. Human society also began to develop at a quick rate.

It was a new page of history. The end of the former era, as well as the ascension of the new one, proceeded so quickly that many Magi found it hard to react to.

North Twilight Zone, in Nature's Alliance Academy.

"Crap, I'm going to be late!"

Will quickly got out of bed and hugged his thick notebook and textbook, a sandwich fresh out of the oven in his mouth as he dashed across the roads of the academy.

The academy was illuminated with large amounts of sun stones and eternal flames. There were even bonsai transplanted to the side of the

roads for viewing pleasure. This would have been unthinkable in the past.

On the roads, there was the occasional sight of acolytes who were all darting towards their own classrooms.

“Mentor Jeline’s reaction field theory is so profound. I don’t understand at all...”

“The principle behind the construction of spell models is very important. It is the basis of all spell models that can be performed, and it needs to be solid. There cannot be any mistake!”

“It’s almost time for the academy competition. Rumours say that the victor can even get guidance from an official Magus!”

Many conversations flew into Will’s ear, and there were even many familiar voices. However, his feet did not stop moving as he ran at a flying speed.

As an acolyte chosen from among the commoners, he truly appreciated this hard-to-come-by opportunity.

It was because he had been up studying till late last night that he had overslept.

After passing by the teaching plaza, all acolytes would respectfully bow towards a statue in the middle.

The statue was carved out of black dazzling stone and formed the image of a handsome young man. His gaze was set far away, as if surveying the scene in the distance from his elevated position. Under the statue, these words were carved in the language of Twilight Zone— ‘Distinguished Guardian of the Realm, Leylin Farlier. Rank 3 Magus, the founder of Nature’s Alliance Academy, once gloriously killed the dark elven empress, dwarven king and gnome prophet in battle, saving all humankind. The patron saint of Twilight Zone, he also has other names, such as the Hand of Sacred Light, the Glorious Guardian and so on...’

“The lord Guardian of the Realm!”

Will bowed slightly towards the statue, admiration apparent in his

expression, “If only I could become such a mighty Magus one day...”

Immediately after, however, he couldn't help but laugh. He really was imagining the wildest things.

Some time after passing by the sculpture, Will couldn't help but turn back and look, only to find a figure under the statue that had the exact same face as the sculpture.

“It's- “ Wale's eyes widened, but when he looked once more, the figure had disappeared, as if all he had seen was merely an illusion.

Shua! Celine drew the curtains, and the giant French window revealed the current bustling, lively situation of Nature's Alliance.

“How is it to see the splendour you created by your own hand?”

Celine laughed as she embraced Leylin's waist from the back.

“Also, welcome back! You've stayed in the laboratory for about fifteen years, haven't you?”

Celine gently placed her head on Leylin's back.

She, who had tasted power, was now even more alluring than beautiful, as enchanting as a poppy.

However, Celine was very aware where her power and status had come from. This was especially so during the period of debauchery Leylin had engaged in when in the central region. She had, at that time, come to realise exactly how stable her position had been. She had even abandoned her work in the east and dashed to Leylin's side.

It was a pity that Leylin's thoughts were all on gathering high-grade meditation techniques and all sorts of information, giving Celine the cold shoulder.

“I don't really feel anything.” Leylin was quite indifferent to all this. The reason why he had established an academy was just so that it would be more convenient for him gather meditation techniques and precious resources.

Chapter 387: Discovery of A Warlock

Celine watched Leylin who was bathing in the light from the sun stones, seemingly intoxicated by the sight.

Leylin still retained his handsome young appearance, as if the passing of time did not leave any traces on him. He, who was glimmering with golden rays, seemed to be a war god wrapped in golden robes.

It was this young man who had already reached the apex in Twilight Zone, having seized immense authority that nobody could even imagine of possessing!

“How are the results of the experiment?” Celine asked.

“Quite alright!” Though there was a smile on his face, it seemed slightly dark, and Celine tactfully did not ask further.

Leylin’s hand groped around her body, but his thoughts were someplace else.

Through supplements from numerous high-grade meditation technique, the A.I. Chip’s meditation technique databank was becoming even more complete, and it had even simulated the fourth level of Kemoyin’s Pupil!

However, Leylin was still slightly worried. He planned on searching for the original Kemoyin’s Pupil meditation technique to compare as well as improve his own. It was always better to be more careful when it came to anything that had to do with the spirit.

If the situation with the meditation technique was a good thing, there was something else that made Leylin’s mood the worst it could be. He looked at his stats.

[Leylin Farlier. Rank 3 Warlock, Bloodline: Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Strength: 23.6, Agility: 20.1, Vitality: 35.7, Spiritual force: 206.5, Magic power: 206 (Magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force).]

“Fifteen years! It’s been fifteen whole years, and the improvement in my meditation technique has been slight. If not for the numbers given by the A.I. Chip, I would have suspected I had completely stopped improving.”

Leylin's expression was dark. In these fifteen years, he had hovered around the level of a rank 3 Warlock that had just advanced. He had not even reached the Vapour Phase of his spiritual force. This speed was making him go crazy.

Though Leylin liked to enjoy himself, those were things he did while he was not increasing his strength. At his level, he might not have a rival in Twilight Zone and be the tyrant he was. However, how was this the life that he wanted?

Before obtaining the greatest strength at the apex, Leylin did not plan to slow his footsteps.

"The resources of Twilight Zone are plentiful for rank 1 and 2 Magi, but for rank 3, they're insufficient. In addition, based on calculations by the A.I. Chip, to become a rank 3 Magus with gaseous spiritual force, I need to have a Vapour Phase spell formation, but it doesn't exist in Twilight Zone!"

Leylin pondered, "In addition, there's still the Kemoyin's Pupil meditation technique. Though the A.I. Chip has simulated a portion of it, it's better to get the original and refer to it."

"All these can't be obtained in Twilight Zone!"

Leylin made his mind, while the beautiful woman beside him let out a frail gasp.

Leylin, who had come back to himself, realised that his hand seemed to have reached a very deep place that was causing Celine to let out pants.

Without telling Celine his plans, Leylin embraced and ferociously rolled her onto the bed...

.....

Even though he enjoyed this pleasure, Leylin did not lose himself to it. He rejected Celine's suggestion of gathering the Magi of Nature's Alliance Academy and instead left, keeping a low profile and travelling around Twilight Zone.

On one hand, Leylin was filled with curiosity about Twilight Zone. After all, he had never truly toured the area, and only gathered information through maps and the information in the A.I. Chip, which was only one aspect of it.

More importantly, Leylin wanted to try his luck. He might even be fortunate enough to discover the legacy of some ancient Magus!

Leylin rejected Celine's requests to accompany him and went on the road since he was used to travelling alone.

He weaved through Twilight Zone. He went deep into the nests of darkness creatures, but also headed to the edge of the world, to see the Magma Sea that stretched as far as the eye could see.

While journeying, Leylin disguised himself as a common wandering Magus. With the A.I. Chip and directions from the coin of destiny, he found quite a few inheritances and the like.

It was a pity that these were all small harvests, and were dispensable to Leylin.

The more dangerous areas, such as Icy World and the Weeping Ghost Grounds that were extremely terrifying, would cause damage to the coin of destiny and were not places Leylin could go to as of yet.

Even so, with his own instincts and the slight directions of the coin, Leylin continued to wander.

A thick darkness constantly shrouded around the earth, and only the light on the carriage persisted, illuminating the surrounding area.

"Is that Grand Ivy Canyon is a ruin left behind by Morning Star Magi?"

On the carriage, Leylin was conversing with another wandering Magus.

Leylin was now concealing his frightening rank 3 aura, and also made adjustments to his outer appearance. Nobody would be able to recognise him as the legendary Glorious Guardian.

After all, he did not want to be surrounded and watched everywhere he went.

He was now having a delightful conversation with a wandering Magus he had just met.

“Yes! I once excavated the outer portions of a ruin and found part of a sculpture there... The surrounding aboriginal culture has also recorded this matter.” The slender blue-haired Magus with a goatee was speaking excitedly.

His name was Pharen. Though he was merely a rank 1 official Magus, he was unusually interested in travelling and adventures. He had once explored many famous ruins and had a great reputation amongst wandering Magi.

Leylin listened quietly while sitting beside him, occasionally asking a few questions and providing opinions, which caused Pharen’s eyes to sparkle.

With his current knowledge, there were few in Twilight Zone who could be compared with him. With just a few words, Pharen was full of praise for him.

Leylin chatted with him once in a while, forcing down the anxiety in his heart.

“I forcefully made a prophecy while disregarding the damage done to the Coin of Destiny. I finally found out that the way to improve further is in the west, but now that I’m here and almost at the Magma Sea, why haven’t I discovered anything yet?”

Leylin dug his hands into his bosom and caressed the surface of the coin of destiny.

On the simple gold coin, there were already two fine cracks, causing Leylin to feel pain in his heart.

“Oh! By the way, may I know what Sir Reynold’s intentions are in accompanying me deep inside here?” Pharen asked.

This was a question that had been in his heart for a long time.

“This is the common territory of the dark elves and dwarves. Though us humans have now seized control, if they see us in the outskirts, we could

easily be surrounded and attacked.”

“There are a few things I have to take care of. Besides, I want to see that magnificent scene you mentioned about the lava tides.” Leylin laughed slightly in answer.

Pharen’s eyes brightened, feeling like he had found someone who could understand himself.

“Not bad. Based on my guesses, the lava tides that are going to burst out will be the largest in a whole century! They might even surge to the surface!” Pharen’s face was flushed.

“That’s impossible. There are several hundred kilometres of earth crust until we reach the surface!” While Leylin said this, his heart suddenly lurched.

The surface? This was something worth considering. Perhaps the directions from the coin of destiny had to do with this.

Of course, Leylin was not going to start fantasising and think that he could use the magma and break through the crust. That was something even Morning Star Magi might not be able to do.

“But this is still possible in theory. As long as I find a suitable place and channel, such as a volcano...”

Leylin touched his chin, thinking that he would need to inspect a few lava lakes that could link him to the surface.

While Leylin was deep in thought, a strange undulation caused him to awaken in surprise.

“This is...” Red rays flashed in his eyes, “A resonance with my bloodline... Who is it?”

He abruptly looked in a direction, stirred up and grim.

“What’s going on?” Pharen waved his hand curiously, and the carriage stopped.

Immediately after, he felt Magi’s energy fluctuations travelling from the direction Leylin was looking at.

“So it’s a battle between Magi! Sir Reynold’s acuity is truly admirable!” Pharen sighed in heartfelt awe.

Just this extraordinary sensory ability made it clear that this Magus called Reynold was ranked far above him.

An energy aura far away sensed something and began to head in this direction at a mad dash.

“Sir Reynold, it looks like they are going to use us as a shield!” Pharen sneered.

Such a scheme was as crude and laughable as a little tease in the eyes of Magi. However, seeing someone dared provoke himself, Pharen’s eyes flashed with an icy glint.

Shoo! A brownish-yellow ray launched over.

The response from his bloodline became more intense.

The yellow light stopped in front of the carriage, revealing a middle-aged Magus. His skin let off a bronze light, and there were numerous traces of burning on his skin. The lines on his face were resolute, and even while heavily injured, he still emanated the charm of a mature man. What was even more eye-catching were his eyes, which was a pair of amber pupils!

“A Warlock! He’s definitely a Warlock, and he has a deep relationship with my bloodline!”

Leylin’s eyes met with the other’s, and they immediately understood each other’s identities.

After seeing Leylin, the middle-aged Magus’ expression slackened and he produced something like an emblem to Leylin, “My lord, please save me!”

He used the Byron Language, which was a mandatory subject for all Magi. Leylin naturally understood.

Thud! As if he had relaxed too much, the middle-aged man could not hold on any longer and collapsed, fainting on the ground.

Pak! The emblem accurately fell in the palm of Leylin’s hand.

Chapter 388: Mankestre Bloodline

Warlock

The emblem was rather small, the back being a bronze base.

After seeing the symbol on the front, Leylin's pupils suddenly shrunk.

It was a giant black serpent formed from numerous runes, holding its tail in its mouth and forming a strange circular imprint.

"That symbol! I've seen it before in the Dylan Gardens!" Leylin obviously would not have forgotten this. The memory was still fresh in his mind.

When he was in the Dylan Gardens, there was a large oil painting of this black snake holding its tail in its mouth in Great Magus Serholm's inheritance. Behind that oil painting had been where Leylin had obtained Kemoyin's Pupil.

This symbol could be said to mark the beginning of Leylin's path as a Warlock!

"Him being a Warlock, the resonance of our bloodlines, and the symbol!" Leylin weighed the emblem in his palm, "Looks like he was what the Coin of Destiny was leading me towards."

"What? Reynold, you know him?" Old Pharen asked.

"No, but I need to rescue him." Leylin's tone was light but held within an unquestionable resolve.

"My apologies, but if you insist, we can only part ways here. I don't want to meet with any trouble."

As a Magus, Pharen instinctively declined.

A rank 1 Magus like that usually represented some form of trouble, and Pharen had no wish to provoke it.

Besides, he and Leylin had merely met en route and just got along well. He wasn't close enough to Leylin that he'd take risks for him.

"Of course. You can leave first." Leylin answered, not finding Pharen's

choice strange.

If Pharen was the type to ardently insist on staying with him, he wouldn't have been able to live to this age.

"I'm sorry!" With an apologetic look on his face, he made to get on the carriage and leave.

"Stop right there!" At this moment, a sudden sound was heard, bringing with it a loud boom.

Five or six streaks of glaring lights shone over from the skies, and by the time the shine dissipated, the figures of six different Magi had appeared.

They were evidently a mix of races, and the presence of dark elves and dwarves surprised Leylin,

Rumble! Amidst the flying dust, a group of elite Underground Winter Spider knights and dwarven soldiers hurried over.

"Human Magus?"

The dwarf and dark elf in charge furrowed their brows after seeing Leylin and Pharen.

Twilight Zone was now a place where the human race had the highest status. Even in the outer regions, human Magi would be respected. Of course, if they were in the desolate outskirts, there would be situations where these races murdered humans and robbed them of their treasures.

Although such acts occurred, there would be no traces left behind, lest the humans use it as a cause to invade.

It was difficult to eliminate two Magi and prevent news from spreading.

"This is a despicable thief that stole the sacred item that our two races are jointly protecting. Magi, please don't misunderstand!" The dark elven and dwarven Magi warned them.

"Protecting a sacred item? What is it?" Leylin curiously scanned the unconscious middle-aged Warlock with his spiritual force and then found a green bundle of vines in his arms.

A concentrated life force extended from within the vine ball.

“So it’s this!” A look of understanding flashed in Leylin’s eyes.

This bundle of vines was actually called the Vitality Fruitvine, and it held within a large amount of life force essence. To those races that trained in meditation techniques like the dark elves’ Life Absorption, it was truly invaluable.

It could replenish much life force and treat injuries or even save lives and was naturally thought of highly by soldiers and the artisan dwarves. That was why these two races were looking after it together.

The reason why Leylin was so knowledgeable on this was because this fruit had always been a major product in the dark elves’ and dwarves’ yearly offerings, and Leylin enjoyed a whole portion of them alone.

Because of him, there was a shortage of these Vitality Fruitvines. Even the theft of one fruit would result in one getting in much trouble and being hunted down.

“Though you are human Magi, these sacred items have to be offered up to the Guardian of the Realm, Lord Leylin!”

Seeing Leylin still unmoved, a dark elf threatened.

“Magus Reynold, you’ve brought me trouble!” Pharen laughed bitterly.

Pharen naturally knew of the famous Guardian of the Realm. Se was the ruler of the entirety of Twilight Zone!

Even he, a wandering Magus, had many mentors and acolytes to take care of. He could not truly break away from them.

At the mention of the legendary rank 3 Magus, Pharen seemed to have plans of casting away this troublesome matter. “Reynold, we...”

“Pfft-!” Leylin could not hold it in and began to laugh.

The smile on his face became so big that he even bent down, holding his belly with both hands, unable to rein in his laughter.

“Human Magus, why are you laughing?” Their leaders exchanged a

glance, having a bad feeling.

At this time, they took note of the handsome young man in front of them, his face seeming to be exceptionally familiar with them.

“It’s the first time someone’s used my own name to threaten me!” After laughing, Leylin’s expression darkened.

At the same time, there was a strange change to his face, as if there was a spontaneous removal of some concealing method.

An aura similar to the awakening of an ancient wild beast began to emanate from his body.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud! The eight legs of the Underground Winter Spiders began to tremble and they weakly fell to the ground. The Underground Winter Spider knights and Dwarven soldiers all fell.

Leylin took a step forward, and space seemed to freeze.

The six Magi in mid-air were forced to the ground, expressions full of terror.

“You-You- You’re Leylin Farlier, the Guardian of Twilight Zone, the Great Emperor of the Night!”

Pharen’s mouth widened, his goatee sticking up. His fingers were trembling and he was so scared he was almost unable to speak.

Goodness! So the one who had been journeying with him was the lord Guardian whose name had spread far and wide? The one who was almost deified?

Pharen immediately searched through his memories until he found he had not said anything unpleasant about Nature’s Alliance or Leylin himself, and then heaved a sigh of relief.

After that, however, his heart got stuck in his throat once more.

Previously, he had been planning on leaving Leylin and that Magus to flee for his life. Would this behaviour gain the displeasure of the Radiant Guardian?

Compared to the inner conflicts Pharen had, the blow Leylin's appearance had towards these other races was completely different.

"Greetings to lord Guardian of the Realm!" The dark elven and dwarven Magi immediately bowed.

Even if he were a fake, the unique energy undulations from a rank 3 Magus could not be mistaken.

The Magi of both races had a very deep impression of Leylin's expression, and even if they were turned to dust, they would not get it wrong.

After all, Leylin had destroyed the splendour their two races had possessed, and even killed their rulers brazenly!

Leylin was now like a devil king or monster to them.

"En! Tell the people behind you that I'm going to take this man. This Vitality Fruitvine will also be considered part of this year's portion." Leylin indifferently ordered.

He was not planning to use raw force because that would just be bullying them.

"Understood, my lord." The dark elven and dwarven Magi heaved a long sigh, bowed, and then withdrew quickly as if there was a great monster chasing them.

The news of Leylin's appearance here was much too mind-blowing, and they had to bring this news to their higher-ups immediately to be able to respond.

.....

"Are you awake? If you are, come here!" The middle-aged Magus opened his eyes, Leylin's voice sounding by his ear.

He immediately got up and saw Leylin standing aside, playing with a test tube full of blood. Within that test tube were strands of earthen-yellow that had congealed, unable to scatter.

"Kubler greets my lord!" he immediately knelt respectfully, looking

deferential and awed, as if a wolf that had seen its king.

Leylin had sensed this. He had the feeling that through his bloodline, he could influence this Magus.

This was a terrifying thing.

“The Huge Mankestre Snake! Your bloodline comes from the Wilted Huge Mankestre Snake.” Leylin concluded.

“Yes. Warlock of the Mankestre Bloodline, Kubler, greets my lord!” he bowed once more.

“No wonder...” Leylin shook his head.

He finally understood the strange feeling he got from this man.

The Wilted Huge Snake Mankestre was said to have a trace of the bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent. Though it was thinned out, it was still a descendant of the Kemoyin Serpent.

In the face of a true Warlock of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent, it was natural to be affected and suppressed by him.

When Leylin was still an acolyte, he had once seen a Huge Mankestre Snake. Though it was still young, it was enough to cause him a headache.

The matured body of this Huge Mankestre Snake was comparable to that of an official Magus. Though it was nothing in Leylin’s eyes now, that was a terrifying strength for acolytes.

“Well then, tell me your history and your reason in coming here.”

Leylin spoke expressionlessly, though his eyes were enough for Kubler’s heart to turn cold.

Though he could not use spirit-searching spells on official Magi, it was very easy for Leylin, a Warlock who had already advanced to rank 3, to completely smash the spirit and extract spirit fragments from him.

Though he would not get a complete set of information if he did that, and this Warlock would definitely die, it was very possible.

Fortunately, Kubler was evidently a sharp-witted man and deathly afraid

of Leylin. Soon enough, he systematically narrated his origins.

After hearing a few words, Leylin's expression became grim.

Chapter 389: Central Continent

Kubler claimed to be a Magus from the central continent.

The hometown of the great Magus Serholm, the core of the entire Magus world, The sacred land of Magi—the central continent!

As for why Kubler was at this place, Leylin could not care less. On the contrary, he was very interested in the route Kubler had taken to get here.

If they were to walk this path in the opposite direction, would they be able to successfully reach the central continent? Leylin spoke the question in his mind, Kubler's face showed a moment of hesitation before he respectfully divulged the truth, "In actual fact, the surface right above this subterranean world is the central continent! I learnt of the exact spot where the lava erupts from a research manual passed down through my family. After calculating the weaker points in the lava, I followed the pathway to arrive at this place.

Having heard Kubler's account, Leylin more or less understood the procedure of his entrance.

On the whole, this was like what he had previously envisaged, and would also explain why the other party's body had horrifying burn wounds—no matter how precise his calculations of the lava's weak points were, the flames and the high temperature were not something a rank 1 Magus could bear.

If he had not by chanced upon the Life Vined Fruit, he might have already become a charred corpse!

"Mmm! I already settled the inconvenience with the dark elves and dwarves. You can have this as a reward for being open with your information!" Leylin waved his hands and threw the Life Vined Fruit into Kubler's hands.

"Thank you, my Lord!" A tinge of gratitude appeared on Kubler's face.

To him, managing to keep his life had already been a huge reward. As for the fruit that was full of vitality, it was a welcome surprise.

Sizzle! A few fine red blood vessels sprouted forth from his fingers, drilled into the insides of the fruit, and started to draw large amounts of life essence.

With a lively green radiance appearing on his body, his burn wounds recovered quickly. The scars gradually faded, eventually disappearing without a trace.

The scene reminded Leylin of the parasitic body of the Huge Mankestre Snake he had seen as an acolyte. The two seemed to have a certain level of similarity in their abilities.

Moreover, the method of directly drawing in vitality seemed to be inspired by the meditation techniques that could absorb others' spiritual force.

Of course, those were all small matters.

Having seen Kubler's state improving, Leylin then asked him about the Black Serpent emblem "Also, this symbol. What meaning does it actually have?"

"What? My lord actually doesn't know?" His response further surprised Leylin, but Kubler calmed down a moment after his reaction. "It doesn't matter, the bloodline cannot be faked."

After seeing Leylin's look of puzzlement, Kubler immediately explained to Leylin: "This is a symbol of our organisation—the Ouroboros Clan!"

"The Ouroboros Clan?" Leylin nodded, that name was indeed very vivid: "Is that an organisation of Bloodline Warlocks?"

"Yes! Furthermore, within the Ouroboros Clan, we only accept Warlocks who hold the bloodline of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent or its descendants!" Kubler answered very certainly.

"Additionally, a Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlock with great power, simply by joining the Ouroboros Clan, could instantly obtain a relatively high rank..." he added after shooting Leylin a glance.

"Since this is the case, then I have nothing much to hide!" Leylin

laughed. “In actual fact, I too am a wandering Magus. I came to Twilight Zone by accident and chanced upon the inheritance of the Giant Kemoyin Serpent among historical remains! It was there that I first saw the symbol of the Ouroboros Clan!”

Leylin spoke honestly. Even though he spoke vaguely, and did not reveal any real details, Kubler was smart enough to not ask further.

On the contrary, he fed large amounts of information regarding the central continent to Leylin.

From this information, and records that he had obtained from ancient books, Leylin finally pieced together an image of the Sacred land of the Magi.

The central continent was the core of the Magus World. It spanned across a huge area, and had an abundance of precious resources!

There, official Magi were as common as the clouds, and rank 2 Magi were the elites! Rank 3 Magi were respected, although there were different ranks to them. Only Morning Star Magi truly held clout.

Organisations in the central continent needed a Morning Star Magus to oversee their development if they hoped to grow in power. Some small organisations were occasionally built by rank 2 or rank 3 Magi, but they were short-lived, typically being destroyed after a short period of time.

“You say we have Warlocks at the Morning Star realm overseeing the Ouroboros Clan?” Leylin was most interested in this.

After all, they were rank 4 Warlocks with the bloodline of Giant Kemoyin Serpents! This was clearly his path ahead!

“Yes!” Kubler was clearly very pleased with Leylin’s usage of “we,” with his tone and expressions being much intimate.

“Among the ranks of our Ouroboros Clan, the Grand Elder, Second Elder, and Third Elder have all reached rank 4. If they joined forces, they could even contend with a rank 5 Radiant Moon Magus! As a result, our Ouroboros Clan could be said to have some fame in the central continent!” Having said this, Kubler clearly felt proud.

“Rank 5! Radiant Moon Magus?” A doubtful expression crossed Leylin’s face, and he asked Kubler to clarify the rankings of Magi after the Morning Star realm.

Official Magi had a total of 9 ranks, and they were respectively termed Magi from rank 1 to 9.

And for every 3 ranks, there would be an extremely large bottleneck.

From rank 1 Magi to rank 3 Magi, and from the rank 4 Magi to rank 6 Magi, and eventually rank 7 and above, the differences between them was extremely terrifying.

The central continent was slowly regaining the splendor of ancient times.

Not only were rank 4 Morning Star Magi becoming common, even rank 5 Radiant Moon Magi and rank 6 Breaking Dawn Magi would appear periodically.

Morning Star, Radiant Moon, and Breaking Dawn were the honorific titles of rank 4, 5 and 6 Magi respectively.

“Am I akin to a moon or sun?” Leylin laughed in his heart, “However, just a Morning Star Magus has a lifespan of more than a thousand years and possesses tremendous strength. The even greater glory and radiance rank 5 and 6 Grand Magi possess can be understood from just that...”

Kubler had not discovered Leylin’s thoughts and continued to narrate, “I don’t qualify to know about what comes after the Breaking Dawn realm. Moreover, the few Magi who are at rank 6 are all the most influential leaders of the central continent, and are titled our ‘Kings!’”

“King of Magi? This term has a lot of meaning to it!” Leylin nodded.

“There are three main powers in the central continent. The Warlocks tied together by bloodlines, the Magus organisations that hold a lot of high-grade meditation techniques, and the Academies where various powers mingle with each other! Together, these three sets control over 70 percent of the resources and land of the entire continent. The rest is occupied by an assortment of human Magi and other species...”

With Kubler's description, a blueprint of the central continent gradually appeared in Leylin's mind.

Strange species! Large amounts of resources! High-ranked Magi! And a larger stage and space for improvement!

A flame ignited within Leylin's eyes, as well as an even stronger urge to immediately rush towards the central continent.

Immediately, he suppressed the desire and impulse.

"Alright! Now can you explain to me why you would risk your life to escape from the central continent?"

Leylin's eyes that radiated coldness glanced into Kubler's, which immediately made the latter feel a chill in his heart.

"Ac... Actually..." Kubler's did not look good. After which he knelt down before Leylin, and placed his forehead tightly on the ground.

"Lord Leylin! Please accept me as one of your henchmen!"

"What do you mean? Please explain yourself clearly!" Leylin's face remained unchanged. After which, he heard some untasteful stories from Kubler.

To put things simply, Kubler had offended someone in the Ouroboros Clan, which had left him with no choice but to leave. Now, he wished to obtain Leylin's protection so as to once again return.

Honestly speaking, from the looks of the central continent Magi, the subterranean world and other areas were all desolate. If not for the fact that he was forced into such circumstances, why would he willingly leave his hometown?

"Why do you think I can protect you?" Leylin desired to know. Before asking clearly, he would not easily promise anything.

"Of course! My lord has already achieved rank 3, and is a Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlock, with a bright future. How can people like us rival that?" Kubler said matter-of-factly, and had a faint tone of admiration and inferiority.

“This subordinate has offended a Black Horrall Snake Warlock, who has the potential to at most grow to rank 3. The high-ranked officers of the Ouroboros Clan would definitely not side with him...”

“Growth potential?” Leylin was alarmed and understood that he heard something extremely important.

“Does My lord not know yet?” Kubler, on the other hand, had already in favour of himself, changed his address of Leylin.

“The inheritance I obtained did not contain any object in this area, please detailedly explain!” Leylin’s face looked upset. His heart had a bad omen.

“Yes! Subordinate will not hide anything!” Kubler’s attitude was extremely upright, and he had started to follow the standards of vassals; Leylin could not be bothered to correct him.

As Kubler narrated, Leylin’s face got gloomier, and eventually was like that of the sky before an imminent storm.

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Chapter 390: Bloodline Shackles

Warlocks were a branch of ancient Magi, and possessed enormous strength as a result of their bloodlines.

Warlocks of a rank not only had all the abilities a regular Magus of that rank held, but also the amplification of their bloodline. Their powers greatly surpassed those of regular Magi.

Why couldn't such a powerful branch dominate the Magus World? Why, instead, did they lay low in the South Coast and Twilight Zone, with even the central continent only containing a small number of them?

All of this could be attributed to their main problem—the shackles of their bloodlines!

According to Kubler, unlike Magi who could continuously improve, the advancement of Warlocks was largely dependent on the bloodline they inherited.

That was to say that, for a Huge Mankestre Snake Warlock like Kubler, because of the bounds of his bloodline, he was destined to never advance further after being an official Magus! No amount of effort could promote him to rank 2! This, was the shackles of a bloodline!

Similarly, the peak of a Black Horrall Snake Warlock's development was rank 3! Such a Warlock would never enter the Morning Star realm!

For a Kemoyin Giant Serpent Warlock like Leylin, even though his pure bloodline could support him in his advancement to rank 2 and rank 3, it was of little effect against the obstacles to becoming a Morning Star Magus.

Moreover, after advancing to a Morning Star, he too would lose his potential to advance. It was impossible for a Warlock to alter his own bloodline, and hence there were nearly no solutions to this problem!

In reality, Magi like Leylin could be considered to be quite fortunate. After all, Morning Star Magi still held some clout even in the central continent.

The more miserable ones were Warlocks who could not even advance to become official Magi, due to the limits of their bloodlines! For instance, if Kubler had used a young Mankestre Snake instead of a matured one, then his entire life would be spent with him as an acolyte. No matter how great his talent was, it would be useless!

Having heard all this, even Leylin who had considerable knowledge broke out in a cold sweat.

Initially, if he had coveted convenience and directly used the blood of the Black Horrall Snake to advance, he might have been restricted to being a rank 3 Magus, and lost any hope of progression!

And now? Although Kubler had said that the limits of his potential were that of a rank 4 Warlock, at least it was better than before.

Moreover, even in ancient times, Morning Star Magi were prominent figures. With their strength, they were likely to have interacted with regions on a broader scale than a rank 3 Magus. As a result, there might already have been some solutions to this!

Lastly, there was still the rich resources of the Icy World and the legendary Snake Dowager, which presented a gleam of hope!

Due to Leylin's confidence in himself, he was only somewhat dispirited before he recovered.

He thought back to what had come up when he obtained the Kemoyin's Pupil meditation technique: "All those who walk on the path of bloodlines will eventually be shackled by the very bloodline itself..."

The line had baffled him then, and had left him with an ominous premonition. From the looks of it now, though, it was a reference to the shackles of a Warlock's bloodline.

"At that time, Great Magus Serholm was cultivating the Giant Kemoyin Serpent bloodline. He had conducted a lot of experiments on bloodlines, perhaps this was why..." Leylin thought of this again.

Very evidently, even in the Circle of Ouroboros, Warlocks of different bloodlines have different positions.

The Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlocks held the highest status, to the point that some pureblood Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlocks could merely rely on time to elapse and enter rank 3 automatically in a few hundred years. They even had the hopes of becoming Morning Star Magi.

As a result, pureblood Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlocks like these would be elite royalty in the Circle of Ouroboros. Viewed as future Morning Star seeds, they were protected and nurtured.

On the other hand, the Black Horrall Snake Warlocks had a bloodline limit of rank 3, and would forever not be able to improve. However, in any case, they relied on the strength of their bloodline and did not have any problems advancing to be rank 2 Magi. There was a possibility to become rank 3 as well, so they ranked just after Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlocks.

As for Huge Mankestre Snake Warlocks like Kubler? They were a bunch with the most miserable status, only slightly better than the acolyte Warlocks. Even rank 3 Warlocks with a slightly better bloodline would look down on them.

This wasn't intentional. Just a result of differences in strength.

Hence, for higher status and better treatment, many lower ranked Warlocks chose to go under the wings of Giant Kemoyin Serpent Warlocks, forming the relationship of a master and vassal. This was how Warlock clans came to be.

Kubler had detected the bloodline resonance of Leylin's Giant Kemoyin Serpent bloodline, and immediately sold himself to Leylin in exchange for protection.

Upon hearing that, Leylin sighed internally. "Looks like no matter where you are, as long as any organisations exist, there will be a hierarchy of power and unfairness, exploitation and oppression!"

Having seen Kubler's nervous and hopeful expression, he laughed weakly: "I, Leylin Farlier, accept you as my vassal! I hope you'll be able to abide by the rules of our master-servant contract! The prestige and status of the family of Leylin Farlier..."

“As you wish, Master! From now on, your wish is my command, as witnessed by this drop of blood!”

Kubler's face was solemn. He cut his hand, and smeared the bright red blood with a tinge of yellow on his forehead, kowtowing low.

Bam! After he paid his respects, Leylin instantly felt a contracted connection, the bloodline contract. To him, there were few restrictions, but the impact on Kubler was much greater.

Originally, Leylin could only hint at and impact Kubler to a small extent through his high-level bloodline. With the contract having taken effect, that influence was amplified. Even if Leylin were to order Kubler to die, Kubler would probably have to follow the orders!

“This control of a higher rank has over a lower rank is this strong?” Having seen this point, Leylin did not experience any joy, but instead, fear had arisen in his heart.

Since the Giant Kemoyin Serpent was a species with a snake bloodline, should it meet a snake species of a higher rank, or even the Snake Dowager, the other party could easily butcher it!

“No! Absolutely not! My will is mine alone!” Leylin shouted violently in his head, and even resolved himself secretly.

Even though he had many considerations, from Kubler's point of view, Leylin was merely mildly startled before accepting his oath.

“Master, I arrived at this point from the spurting of the lava, this is the map and the site of the volcano!”

After Kubler got up, he immediately passed on a map to Leylin with both hands.

“Are you in a hurry?” Leylin looked at the map; at the top, there was labelled a curvy path. In the upper region were more detailed lava sites. The only drawback was that there were damages and stains in some areas, which could not be seen clearly.

“Master, I made use of the dormancy of the volcano to get here. Large

amounts of the lava had solidified into pathways to this place. If we are to get out, we must rush to do it before the volcano erupts. If not, large amounts of lava will block the pathways. This conditions will only last a few days. If we miss this opportunity, we will have to wait for at least a hundred years...

Kubler's thoughts naturally would not be able to keep Leylin in the dark, hence he just said it out directly.

Even though he had just arrived here, he already disdained the nasty conditions of Twilight Zone. Not only was the energy particle concentration here much lower than that of the central continent, the resources were also much poorer.

For instance, the Vitality Fruitvine might not have been common in the central continent, but rank 3 acolytes could get a hold of them. It wasn't big enough for official Magi to fight each other over.

Seeing his longing to return, Leylin's anticipation towards the central continent immediately increased.

The prosperity of the central continent seemed to have exceeded his expectations. The description even contained traces of the golden age of the ancient Magi.

"This can come later. First, I'll go check out where you came from..." Leylin stroked his chin and kept the map.

Even though he had decided to proceed towards the central continent, there were many things to settle in Twilight Zone as well.

After all, in a guild as big as Nature's Alliance, there were a lot of vested interests. Also, were Leylin to disappear, the human race would be thrown into chaos, and this might even extend to beings of other species.

Bloop! Bloop! This was a huge lava lake. Large amounts of fresh red lava continuously boiled to the top, radiating heat. The lava at the central had grown so hot it was golden-yellow, the glow of the ripples captivating even in its danger.

"This high temperature," Leylin's face slightly changed, "I'm afraid that

even with my defense I could withstand it for ten hours at most!”

Above the lake was a giant hole. It was pitch black, with no exit in sight, but there were traces of wind howls transmitting out from it.

“Above us is the main entrance towards the giant volcanic mountain range. Normally, the lava level is so high that it covers the entrance. Only once in a hundred years, during the short dormancy, does it drop down low enough to travel through...” Kubler explained.

“I know!” Leylin’s body rose into mid-air, as he felt the edges of the cave. A strange feeling of a solid glow with a tinge of heat was transmitted over.

After being immersed in large amounts of lava, the surface of the rock was not composed as it was before. It had become an alloy of metal and crystal.

“We need to make the most of the time we have! If not, we won’t be able to make it back to the surface of the earth before the lava engulfs the area!” Kubler’s expression looked peculiar. Similarly, he had not thought that having just arrived at this place, he would have to journey back again.

Chapter 391: Planning For The Afterlife

“No, don’t worry! I have better plans!”

Leylin smiled faintly: “Furthermore, I still have some things to settle here....”

Kubler’s heart was too full of worry. He wondered whether his Lord was going to wait a hundred years for the next cycle.

Mankestre Bloodline Warlocks like him did not have a long lifespan. He could, at most, last two or three hundred years. A hundred years was, to him, a significant portion of his lifespan!

But... Kubler looked at the man whom he now served. As a vassal, the Lord has the last say, so what more could he do than laugh bitterly?

“I’ll be heading out for a while. Stay here and monitor the lava flow data, and contact me periodically using our secret imprints. In the meanwhile, use the special rocks here to make one of these. All you have to do is follow this blueprint!”

A fluorescent blue light flashed in Leylin’s eyes. It took him but a moment to form a design and imprint it into a crystal ball.

Kubler’s face changed slightly as he received it, and he respectfully lowered his head. “Yes, my Lord!”

“Alright!” Moments after the order was given, Leylin transformed into a dark silhouette and disappeared.

A black streak pierced through the sky, creating friction with the air and leaving behind an ear-piercing screech.

Even if he had time to prepare, it was running out, so it was important to make the most of it!

Nature’s Alliance, North Twilight Zone.

Celine sat behind the huge and luxurious office table and stretched lazily, revealing her perfect curves.

Although doing irksome corrections and office affairs every day was very

troublesome, she found the tiring job enjoyable.

It made every cell in her body shiver with excitement – and even made her slightly moist down below – every time she thought about how every word she put to paper, even every sentence she uttered, would make a big difference to the fates of numerous acolytes and even Magi.

“But it is a pity that my position here is not fully secured....” Celine glanced at her flat and smooth abdomen, a rather reluctant expression on her face.

“What’s wrong? Are you still grumbling that you’re not with child?”

The voice of a young man suddenly sounded from inside the office.

“Ra... Radiant Guardian!”

When the other female Magi and office administrators saw Leylin, they could not contain the excitement in their eyes. Files were overturned and cups of tea spilled as they rushed to bow.

“Mmm!” Leylin said as he nodded and waved.

All the Magi except Celine left the office quickly, completely silent.

“Yes!” Celine looked into Leylin’s eyes without fear.

Although the mental state of this impeccably handsome man was rather decent, his attire was somewhat dusty and messy.

‘Could this be the aftermath of rushing and being nervous?’ As a keen and observant woman, Celine immediately realized this...

“Leylin, you’re currently standing at the peak of Twilight Zone. One step and you can turn the entirety of it into a Magus kingdom, and pass it on through the generations!” Celine’s voice held a mixture of excitement and confusion, “A child! All you need is a child! An inheritor to your power!”

Her eyes clouded up as she hugged Leylin.

If it was the past, Leylin definitely would not hesitate to argue with her over it. But now, Celine noticed the calm in Leylin’s eyes; calm like the still waters of an old well.

A realization hit Celine, making her immediately sink into immense fear. The day she loses Leylin's affection would be the day she loses everything. This was also the reason why she strongly wished to bear Leylin's child.

Even as she struggled to think of a method to show her affection, Leylin's next words beat her down into the abyss.

"I have to go!"

"You're going?" Celine was feeling slightly giddy, "Where to?"

"I'm leaving this place! Leaving Twilight Zone!" Leylin paused at every word, making sure Celine heard everything clearly.

"Are you mad? Why do you want to leave this place? You're the king here! You're my sun and my star. You are my everything...."

What would happen once Leylin leaves? The mere thought of scenarios that might happen if he followed through with his words made Celine sink into extreme fear. She hugged Leylin tightly, tears flashing at the corners of her eyes.

And yet, Leylin cruelly pushed her away, his hand cold as steel.

Celine calmed down and gazed at the emotionless Leylin.

"As you know, I'm actually not even a Magus of Twilight Zone, it was all an accident!" Leylin slowly said.

Regarding his history, after going through so many interactions and investigations, this woman had probably speculated a lot already.

Sure enough, Celine's face remained unchanged and she evidently did not feel surprised.

"I seek the pinnacle of the Magus world. The scene of different worlds from the top will be the most beautiful view one could ever hope for... So I cannot stop advancing. I must continue forward until I achieve my goal! I believe you too can understand this!"

Leylin looked into the depths of Celine's eyes.

At this moment, Celine had already completely calmed down. ‘Or rather, was it all just an act before?’ Leylin’s thoughts stopped here as he couldn’t help but secretly feel a little annoyed.

“I do! I’ve always known that when this place is can no longer fulfill your requirements any further, you would leave. I fully understand that, but I never thought that our separation would be this quick, or in this manner!”

Celine chuckled bitterly as she combed through her messy hair.

“Fate is unpredictable!” Leylin tried to hide the news about the central continent. “Plus, I’ve also made appropriate arrangements!”

“What arrangements? I can’t keep the other races and rank 2 Magi in check. Even I rose the ranks to the peak with your help, I’m only a rank 1 Magus, not someone they’ll listen to!” Celine was indeed very realistic and had already accepted the reality of Leylin leaving and was already planning her own future.

Swish! Leylin flicked his finger and a black ray of light penetrated the window, landing on the huge black stone sculpture in the plaza in front of the teaching block.

Buzz! The sculpture started trembling and a thin barrier of light flickered at the top.

“I left some of my aura on this sculpture. As long as my main body doesn’t die, this barrier of light will never dissipate... Believe in the deterrence of this rank 3 Magus and you’ll still be able to continue for a very long time!”

Other than being a clear indicator of whether he was dead or alive, there was absolutely nothing else that was useful about this aura.

But as long as the Magi of Twilight Zone knew that Leylin was still alive somewhere, he would be a terrifying deterrence to them. And this was a way of assuring that the relations and power he left behind still existed!

“Good! What else?” Celine’s voice finally contained some hope.

“These!” Leylin handed her a few fine, white crystal chips.

“These are some spirit sources that I control: Iren, Gogoer and a few Rank 2 Magi! As long as they’re in your hands, there will never come a day where they betray you!”

These Magi were the core strength of Nature’s Alliance. In fact, as long as Celine had them under her control, the entirety of Nature’s Alliance would be subject to her manipulation.

As long as there was no internal conflict, Nature’s Alliance was the most powerful in the entire Twilight Zone. Even if Leylin suddenly went missing and caused a stir, it would not affect Nature’s Alliance too much.

After all, this was still Leylin’s backup plan. He still had the treasures of the Icy World waiting to be excavated and he would not give up on them so easily. This was also the reason why Leylin specially rushed back to prepare. Celine herself wasn’t an important enough reason for him to return.

“Besides, when I disappear, you can simply claim that I’ve gone to a secret facility for research. Anyway, it’s common for high-rank Magi to spend a decade on research, no?”

“Alright, good bye!” Leylin finally said and left.

This was similar to how a person working at an office would act before leaving every morning. Leylin simply left after a few words, not at all like someone who was going to leave for someplace far away.

In any case, Leylin had already seen Celine for who she was: a woman whose heart will never truly be moved. She was just calculative and thirsty for power. Looking at her suppressed excitement as she held the spirit sources, she must have already been rejoicing on the inside.

“Hold on! This will not be the last time right? What I said before was true, I will take care of your bloodlines, and turn them into the Guardian of the next generation...” Celine bit her lower lip.

“I’m sorry. I don’t have much time!” Leylin’s figure transformed into a black ray of light and he shot into mid-air, disappearing into the horizon in a flash.

Leylin understood Celine's plans very well.

Bloodlines of high-leveled Magi were hard to come by. Furthermore, he progressed incredibly fast. Celine thought that his bloodline was from an ancient, fearful creature. Hence, she wanted him to leave some of his seeds behind.

In actual fact, Leylin was now a first generation Bloodline Warlock. The blood descendants he left behind would also have the Kemoyin's Bloodline and would naturally be Warlocks! With a bit of nurturing, they would be unbelievably strong!

But why would Leylin do that? Even when he fooled around with numerous girls before, he had secretly controlled his secretion and made sure not to leave any descendants behind.

A clink sounded in Celine's hands as Leylin walked away, leaving behind remnants of a delicate gold cup.

She always had great confidence in her charm and knowledge, but looking at the situation now, it seemed like Leylin did not have the slightest bit of concern towards her. This hurt her pride badly.

But a smile crept onto her face once again as she stared at the huge number of spirit sources in her palms.

Now that Leylin had left, the power of Nature's Alliance truly lied in her hands! A wave of happiness drowned her heart as her face flushed.

Everything had happened just as how Leylin had predicted. Under Celine's leadership, Nature's Alliance naturally became stronger.

Though there was unrest in the Twilight Zone for the 10 years after Leylin's absence, it would still be contained.

This, too, was related to Leylin's prior subjugation of the power-hungry Twilight Zone Magi and the major powers of other races.

Gradually, the tales of Radiant Guardian Leylin turned into a legend. As for Leylin, a new journey was just beginning for him...

Credits

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